Military says it's closing in on Al-Ghozi in Zamboanga

Story on PAGE A2

DOLE: 4.35 million Filipinos are jobless

ABOUT 540,000 Filipinos joined the ranks of the unemployed last July.

Government data showed that the number of jobless Filipinos reached 4.35 million in July, up from 3.81 million in July 2002.

The unemployment rate now stands at 12.7 percent, compared to 11.2 percent in July 2002.

DOLE/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Surprise: Lakas wants GMA for '04

By Carlito Pablo

THE POLITICAL cauldron is steaming up. It's not exactly a surprise that the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats will endorse President

SURPRISE/ A21

PUSTAHAN TAYO... TATAKBO YAN

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Wednesday, September 17, 2003 ★★ 62 pages / 6 sections / vol. 18 / no. 281 P15
website: www.inq7.net

Fiery welcome for Bush in RP

'DESPERATELY seeking Al-Ghozi in Classmate in Quezon City? Not quite. The PNP chief himself arrives on Monday night with three of his generals, an elite police unit and a pack of reporters in another futile search, this time of wining and dining cops. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Ebdane leads media bar hopping in QC

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE COUNTRY'S top cop, with three of his ranking men in tow, set out Monday night to smoke out police officers in nightclubs in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

But the mission of Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., chief of the Philippine National Police, went for naught at Classmate and Mystique, two of the more notorious—and expensive—nightclubs in Quezon City. It was reportedly at Classmate that police officers and other patrons were recently held up and divested of cash and valuables, supposedly by members of the Kuratong Baleleng crime syndicate.

Earlier Monday, PNP officials advised reporters of an

EBDANE/ A21

Militants set to burn 100 US flags

By Norman Bordadora and Gerald G. Lacuarta

A HUNDRED burning "star-spangled banners" will greet US President George W. Bush during his visit to the country on Oct. 18, a militant group said yesterday.

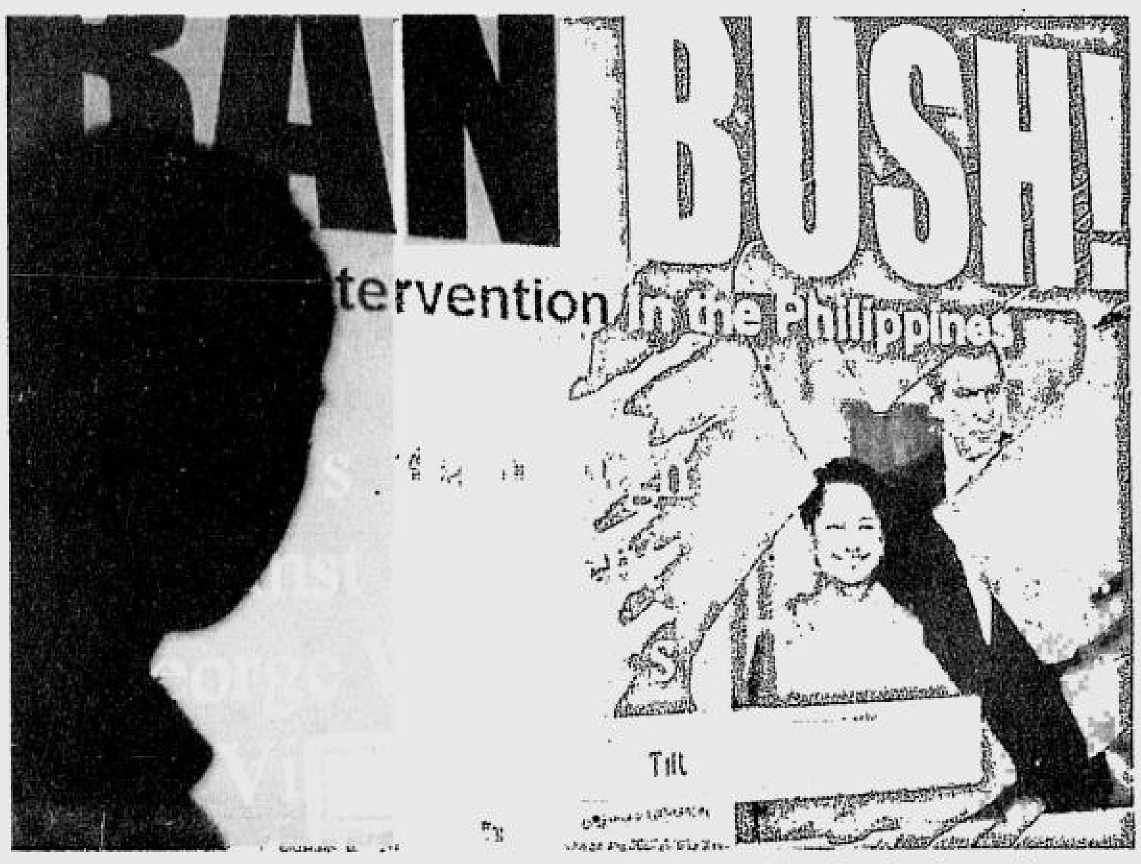
The burning of flags would be the centerpiece of the militant groups' Long March against poverty and what they called imperialist aggression.

The peasant group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas said it would lead the burning of 100 American flags at the former US military installation in Clark Field, Pampanga, where Bush is expected to land.

"We will burn the American flags to highlight the protest actions during the Bush visit. A peasant long march will hound Bush wherever he goes," KMP secretary general Danilo Ramos told the INQUIRER.

Ramos admitted that burning

FIERY/ A20



BASHING US President George W. Bush, militant groups in a forum at UP on Tuesday discuss plans on how to maximize the impact of their protest actions against the American President. JOAN BONDOC

Divine timing: Rosales prophet against globalization, says priest

By Volt Contreras

WAS it divine timing?

When the Vatican announced the appointment of Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales as the new prelate of Manila over the weekend, the latest round of world trade talks in Cancun had just collapsed.

For some anti-globalization activists, the coincidence was providential, because Rosales is not only an environmentalist. According to militant priest Joe Dizon, the archbishop-elect of Manila has also devoted his ministry to exposing the ills of globalization while tending spiritually to an impoverished flock in the Southern Tagalog region.

Rosales "may be unknown in Manila, but he is a real champion of the causes of the poor," a role that marked his 10-year tenure as archbishop of Lipa, Batangas, Dizon said.

Just last July, Rosales and two other Southern Luzon bishops—Julio Labayen of Infanta, Quezon and Chito Tagle of Imus, Cavite—spearheaded a "conference on globalization" that gathered some 80 non-government organizations from across the region.

The two-day forum held in Tagaytay City produced a "declaration" that, Dizon recalled, was basically a "critique" of globalization as being at the root of the poverty of the Catholic faithful.

"He knows that globalization has its excesses and that it is no longer serving the interest of the poor," Dizon told the INQUIRER.

"With his appointment, you can say that the papal nuncio, who reportedly played a decisive role (in the selection process), did his job well. He knows what the Church in the Philippines now needs," he added.

The Tagaytay declaration which Rosales helped craft, he said, holds that any development

DIVINE/ A19

GMA hails emergence of Cancun 20

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo sees the emergence of a new and expanding alliance of developing countries as the silver lining in the collapse of global trade talks in Cancun, Mexico.

The government has taken the breakdown in talks as positive because the poor countries were able to postpone the adoption of a new round of trade liberalization commitments until developed countries live up to their promises in the previous round to open up their markets and reduce subsidies.

"We must now ride the fresh tide of trade politics that is just and fair to the developing nations and take into account the welfare of the great majority of the world's peoples," the President said in a statement.

"The emergence of a new alliance of more than 20 developing countries can be considered a positive outcome of the Cancun summit," she added.

The group, led by Brazil, China and India and including the Philippines, pressed for agricultural reforms and removal of First

GMA/ A20

HERE'S THAT RAINY DAY AGAIN. Umbrella weather is upon the metropolis as seen through a glass window of a moving vehicle in Quezon City. A tropical depression named Quiel has maintained its strength as it moves toward Northern Luzon today, Pagasa warns. JOAN BONDOC

Villa San Miguel will continue to be House of (Cardinal) Sin

By Jerome Aning and Juliet Javellana

THE Archbishop's Palace in Mandaluyong City will continue to be the House of Sin for some time yet.

Because Jaime Cardinal Sin is the first Archbishop of Manila to retire in 101 years, ecclesiastical officials faced some uncertainty over where he will reside.

The INQUIRER reported last month that Sin may spend his retirement in his ancestral home in New Washington, Aklan, which has a dialysis machine for his renal ailment.

But sources at the archbishop's office said Sin may also opt to remain at the Mandaluyong palace, familiarly known as Villa San Miguel, for the meantime, be-

VILLA/ A19

Apostle of 'depoliticization'

By Lito B. Zulueta

ANALYSIS

BY NOMINATING a low-key prelate to succeed Jaime Cardinal Sin, the Vatican is paving the way for the depoliticization of the country's premier See—an archdiocese whose political record of leading two People Power revolutions in 15 years is both unparalleled in world history and a source of unease for a "pilgrim" Church.

The first assignment of Sin's successor, Bishop Gaudencio Rosales, is unenviable—to remake Sin's twin legacies: a Church that is vibrant and even militant, and a Church that is politically interventionist. It is even likely that Rosales will unmake the second.

Rosales' strong pastoral-spiritual background will help him in setting the new tone for Manila. He is expected to emphasize communal spirituality and personal holiness.

Theologians and priests described Manila Archbishop-elect Rosales as "strong in spirituality."

"He represents the road to holiness that we are all called to," said Fr. Fausto Gomez, O.P., the dean of sacred theology of the University of Sto. Tomas.

APOSTLE/ A19

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2003
E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/09/17/03

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Ex-generals deny plot vs gov't

Agfo renounces destabilization moves but raises concern over corruption

By Norman Bordadora

WHILE denying that some of their members were involved in destabilization attempts, retired military generals yesterday said President Macapagal-Arroyo should address the charges of widespread official corruption as it was one of the major causes of political and economic instability.

Retired Brig. Gen. Ernesto Gidaya, president of the Association of Generals and Flag Officers, denied reports that some of Agfo's members were fomenting a new rebellion but said the government must face the problem of graft head-on.

Gidaya made the statement amid persistent reports that some retired generals identified with former President Ramos have been meeting to allegedly hatch a coup plot in the wake of the Jose Pidal scandal involving First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Also yesterday, Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, the Armed Forces vice chief of staff, said that destabilization threats from the military have been greatly reduced since the days immediately preceding and following the July 27 failed coup.

"The only remaining source of destabilization, if you want to call it that, is the increased political activity," Garcia said in a telephone interview.

Gidaya agreed with Garcia that "too much politics" was destabilizing.

Gidaya said opposition allegations of corruption against the First Couple, was "part of [the] destabilization."

He said he did not believe the Jose Pidal exposé would lead to a people power uprising. But he admitted that some Agfo members were part of groups critical of the Macapagal administration like the Council for Philippine Affairs.

He reiterated that Agfo itself did not support destabilization attempts against the government.

Antonio Villanueva, a retired general who is a regular at the Agfo clubhouse at Camp Aguinaldo, is one of those known to be active in Copa.

Villanueva said that he personally did not believe that destabilization moves against the President would be good for the country.

Even Ms Macapagal's resignation would be detrimental to political and economic stability, he said.

Military says it's zeroing in on Al-Ghozi

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Has the military finally located fugitive Indonesian terrorist Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi?

A ranking military commander in Mindanao believes so.

Brig. Gen. Ignacio Illenberger, commander of the Marine Forces South, said there were "strong indications" that Al-Ghozi was hiding in Tungawan, Zamboanga Sibugay.

"We are pursuing these indicators, applying the same strategy we used against slain ASG (Abu Sayyaf Group) chief Abdurajak Janjalani before his neutralization in the late '90s," Illenberger told the INQUIRER.

Among the leads he mentioned was the seizure on Sept. 8 of communications equipment inside a house outfitted with three solar panels in the said town, by elements of the 5th Marine Battalion Landing Team.

Illenberger said military efforts were being concentrated on the area. He declined to give details, but said the P5-million reward on Al-Ghozi's head could hasten the operation.

The search for the Indonesian bomber, an operative of the Muslim terrorist network Jemaah Islamiyah, has been going on since he escaped on July 14 from his detention cell in Camp Crame, along with Abu Sayyaf bandits Edris Ong and Omar Opik Lasal.

Ong was later killed in Lanao del Norte but authorities failed to bag Al-Ghozi and Lasal.

Last month, a large-scale military operation was conducted in Kabuntalan, Maguindanao following reports that Al-Ghozi had been sighted there. After days of operations marked by minor clashes with Muslim rebels, the searchers came away empty-handed.

On Sunday last week, rumors that Al-Ghozi had been killed in an encounter in Sultan Kudarat, was fueled by a military statement about a slain man who closely resembled the Indonesian.

But the lone fatality in the reported shootout turned out to be an "escapee" from a Cotabato City detention center. Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division based in Maguindanao, identified the man as Rodolfo Collado Jr. *Julie S. Alipala and Nash B. Maulana with a report from Charlie C. Senase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Purge leaves ARMM voter list .9M less

ONLY 300,000 out of the expected 1.2 million voters have registered in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

This was revealed by Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos who said that this was part of the cleansing process.

"From the very start, the voters' (list) of ARMM, reportedly 1.2 million, was loaded before the purging ... There were multiple registrations and children as young as ten years old were allowed to vote," Comelec information director Diego Cagahastian said.

"Now the correct figure is being realized through the general registration," he added.

The ARMM registration started on July 25 and was suppose to end on July 30. However, it was extended to Aug. 5.

The registration was held in the provinces of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao, Basilan and Lanao del Sur. It also included the cities of Marawi and Isabela.

The area had long been suspected of having numerous "flying voters" and it is also said that it is in these areas where even animals and dead persons can vote. *Martin Marfil*

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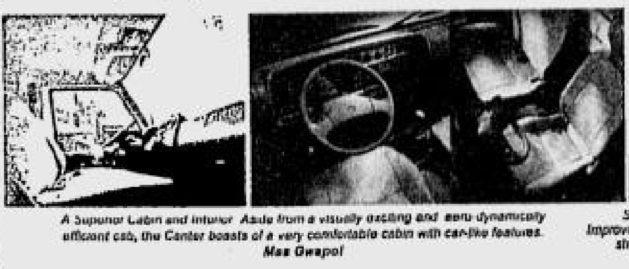

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FUSO

Bush visit to benefit RP economy, says Camacho

By Gil C. Cabacungan

FINANCE Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the state visit of United States President George W. Bush in October, no matter how brief, would "boost" confidence in the country's economy in an "unsettled" global environment.

"The fact that the world's most powerful leader would be visiting the Philippines is of great significance to us," said Camacho in a briefing at Malacañang yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday she and Bush would be reaffirming their commitment to certain key programs that would push forward political and economic security in this part of the world during the US President's visit.

"The Filipino people will continue to benefit immensely, in terms of jobs, livelihood opportunities and public safety, from our strategic relationship with the United States," said the President in a statement.

The US head of state will make an 8-hour state visit here on Oct. 18 en route to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Bangkok.

Camacho said Bush's visit would further reinforce the relations between the United States and the Philippines that he said had been returned to the level they had been before the closure of the US air and naval bases here in 1992.

With only a little over a month before the Bush visit, he said US businessmen are already stepping up their efforts to scout for business opportunities in the Philippines.

Members of the US-Asean Business Council led by Robert Driscoll met with Ms Macapagal and Camacho in Malacañang on Monday to discuss the investment areas that Americans have expressed keen interest in.

These include human resources development, particularly in boosting the English proficiency of Filipino labor; power supply, the government having projected an energy shortfall by 2006; air transport, and media and telecommunications.

Camacho said US businessmen have also expressed support in lobbying for the increased access of Philippine tuna and mango produce to the US market.

Camacho said the US-Asean Business Council has also pushed for the adoption of a free trade agreement between the US and the Philippines, strengthening of anti-piracy rules, and promotion of genetically modified agriculture.

No Pinoys in Saudi jail fire

NO FILIPINOS were killed or injured in the fire that hit the largest prison in Saudi Arabia on Monday. The blaze, described as the deadliest prison fire in the kingdom's history, killed 67 inmates and injured 20 others and three security guards.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople yesterday confirmed that none of the 48 Filipinos detained at the Al-Hair Prison were killed or injured when fire engulfed its compound at 6 p.m. Monday.

The Al-Hair Prison is a maximum-security prison.

Gerald G. Lacuarta

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Today's *What's News* questions:

1. The latest Nokia mobile phone that glows in the dark is...
   a. 3150
   b. 3100
   c. 2100
   d. 3310
2. Dubbed as one of the greatest NBA players of all time
   a. Robert Jaworski
   b. Asi Taulava
   c. Dennis Rodman
   d. Michael Jordan
3. He recently won the men's singles title at the US Open
   a. Andy Roddick
   b. Pete Sampras
   c. Andre Agassi
   d. Juan Carlos Ferrero
4. The star of Marimar who is now making waves in USA as a singer
   a. Mariah Carey
   b. Jennifer Lopez
   c. Thalia
   d. Shakira
5. Who is not part of the cast of the movie "SWAT"?
   a. Colin Farrell
   b. Samuel L. Jackson
   c. LL Cool J
   d. Harrison Ford

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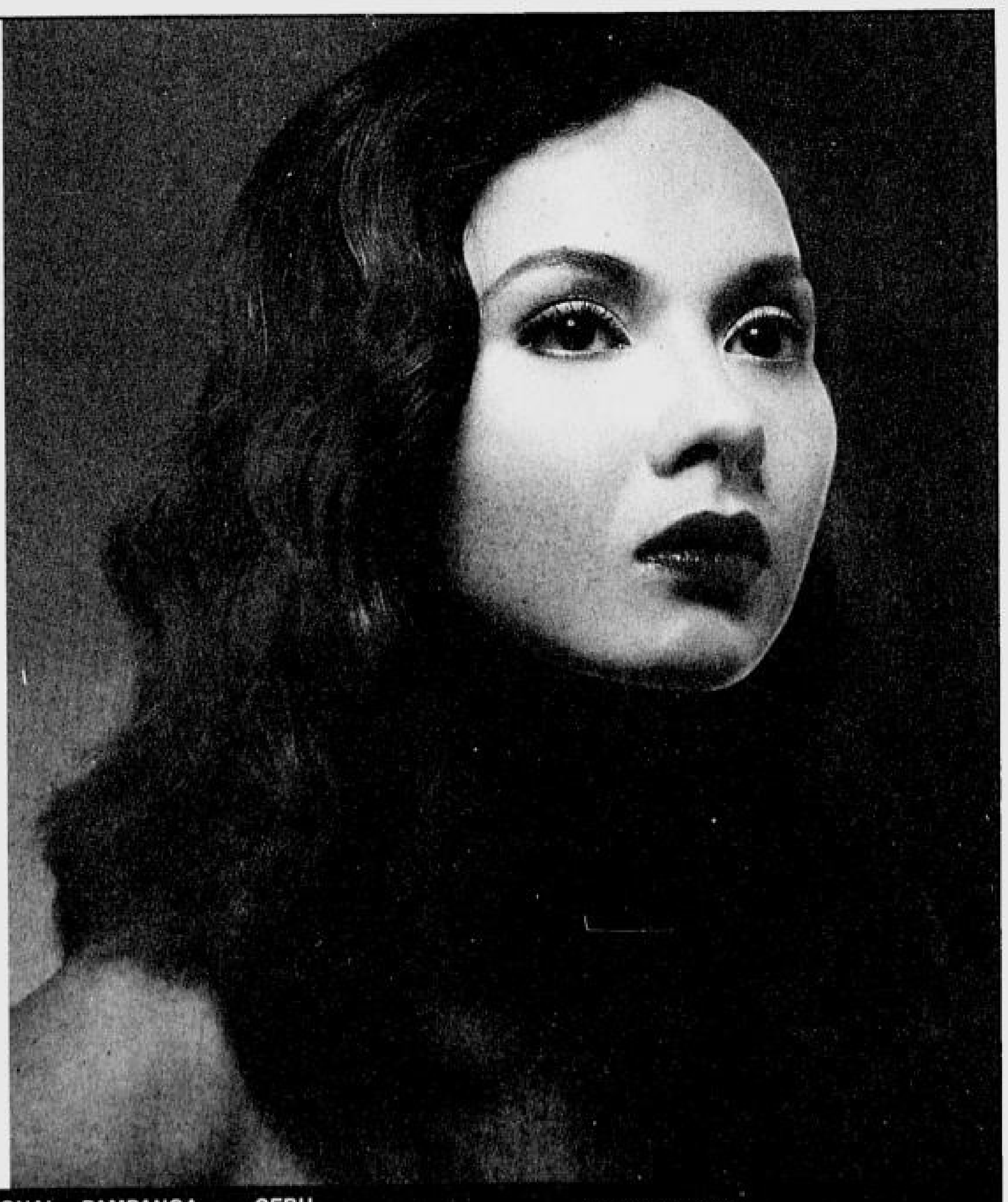

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815 3121	687 2197	372 6634	717 0076	809 9583	243 8602	920 7992	860 2663/64	233 7633/35

OPENING HOURS
MONDAY-FRIDAY: 8:00AM-7:00PM SATURDAY: 8:00AM-5:00PM

Mike A preparing barrage of charges against Ping

By Dona Pazzibugan

FIRST Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo is in no hurry to bring opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson who accused him of laundering funds in secret bank accounts before the Senate ethics committee.

Arroyo's lawyer Jesus Santos said they are still compiling the information against Lacson.

"It's not yet complete," Santos told a news conference at the LTA building yesterday.

"We're not in a hurry," he added, pointing out that they have already filed 10 counts of libel against Lacson.

The Mike Arroyo camp said it would file a complaint against Lacson before the Senate's ethics committee for presenting false testimony and documents in his headline-grabbing two-part exposé against the husband of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Lacson alleged that Mike Arroyo had used the fictitious "Jose Pidal" name in opening bank accounts that he said held hundreds of millions of pesos in laundered money.

Mike Arroyo's brother Ignacio has come forward to claim that he owned the "Jose Pidal" accounts but invoked his right to privacy when asked for details about the accounts during the Senate blue ribbon committee hearings last week.

The committee's entire membership has yet to decide whether Ignacio Arroyo could invoke the right to privacy.

His lawyer Antonio Zulueta, who claimed that his client's right to privacy was guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, said he welcomed the Senate decision to continue with the hearings on the Jose Pidal case.

"It merely affirms our position that Senator Lacson, until this date, has failed to present proof of his allegations," he said.

Mike Arroyo's lawyer said they are in no hurry to file their ethics complaint since "Lacson has not been able to prove anything yet."

Banks deny Lacson's claim

Santos said all the seven banks that Lacson named in his exposé have issued certifications denying Lacson's claim that they were holding Jose Pidal accounts.

These are the Union Bank, Banco De Oro, BPI Family Savings Bank, Philam Savings Bank, Banco Filipino, Allied Bank and Metrobank.

The International Commercial Bank of China has also publicly denied Lacson's claim of a dummy Jose Pidal account in its Hong Kong branch.

Santos also said Lacson failed to show that public funds went into the Pidal account, which Ignacio Arroyo claims he had from 1997 until August 2001 when it was closed.

PROXY WAR: Lawyer Jesus Santos, legal counsel of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, holds a press conference for his client while Sen. Sergio Osmeña III (below) picks up the ball for the absent Sen. Panfilo Lacson as the controversy over the Jose Pidal accounts turns into a battle of proxies.

ROMY HOMILLADA/JESS YUSON

Serge wants secrecy law tested

THE SENATE committees investigating the controversial Jose Pidal accounts have been asked to rule on how far the Bank Secrecy Law can be invoked by the banks said to be holding the dummy accounts allegedly owned by First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

Opposition Sen. Serge Osmeña III said yesterday he sought such ruling on Monday when the Senate committees on public accountability, constitutional amendments and banks decided to continue with the inquiry but deferred any decision on whether Ignacio Arroyo, Mike Arroyo's brother, would be allowed to invoke the right to privacy.

Osmeña, who chairs the banking committee, said the committees want the officials of the banks concerned to be recalled at the resumption of the Senate inquiry next month.

"I would like a ruling on how far we can allow the banks to invoke the Bank Secrecy Law in refusing to answer our question even though they are not germane to the issue," the senator told reporters yesterday.

In the last Senate hearing, bank officials either said they could not recall details or invoked the Bank Secrecy Law when asked to identify the bank managers who handled the accounts that Ignacio Arroyo allegedly opened under the name of Jose Pidal.

Osmeña maintained that the senators' bid to seek such details as the name of the bank officials who attended to Ignacio Arroyo when he opened the Jose Pidal accounts did not violate the Bank Secrecy Law. He said the law only disallowed the disclosure of information pertaining to deposits on banks. *Christine O. Avendaño*

DENR chief accused of graft in $2.6-M deal

A FORMER lawyer of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday accused Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun of alleged irregularity in the bidding of a $2.6-million consultancy services contract for a project co-funded by the Asian Development Bank which was won by Gaia South Inc., a company allegedly owned by Gozun.

Lawyer Juliano P. Nacino, a former member of the DENR Bids and Awards Committee, told reporters that the consultancy contract to be awarded to Gaia South and its foreign partner Environmental Services Australia-Overseas should be reviewed because of alleged anomalies in the bidding.

Based on the 1992 Articles of Incorporation of Gaia South Inc., Nacino said, Gozun is one of the original incorporators of the consultancy firm. The others are former DENR Secretary Fulgencio S. Factoran, former Undersecretary Delfin Ganapin, incumbent Undersecretary Renato de Rueda, Mines and Geosciences Bureau Director Horacio Ramos, Lirio Abuyuan and Ebert Bautista.

According to Nacino, he was pressured by Gozun to resign as DENR legal service director after he and Raymond P. Mendoza, another committee member, refused to sign the bid contract for Gaia.

Gozun, who is currently attending the 5th World Parks Congress in Burban, South Africa, could not be reached for comment.

But in a statement, DENR Undersecretary Renato de Rueda dismissed Nacino's claim, saying that Gozun had already divested of her shares in Gaia South Inc. in 1994 when she became a World Bank consultant. De Rueda said he himself also divested from the consultancy firm in 1994.

The divestments, De Rueda noted, were done long before the bidding of the consultancy contract in 2001 during the term of Secretary Heherson Alvarez, who appointed Nacino in September 2002.

DENR Undersecretary Demetrio L. Ignacio Jr., co-chair of the Bids and Awards Committee, also said that Gozun was no longer part of the Gaia South since 1994.

Ignacio said that an open bidding was conducted for the consultancy services contract. Aside from Gaia South and Environmental Services Australia-Overseas, five other firms vied for the contract.

"Gaia South and its partner gave the most competitive technical and financial bid. We have made the recommendation but the ADB has the final say on this," Ignacio said.

In a separate interview, Mines Bureau Director Ramos said that he was no longer part of Gaia since 1996 when he joined government service.

Former DENR Secretary Factoran, another incorporator, said that Nacino's charges are baseless, adding that Nacino failed to get the latest articles of incorporation of Gaia South. *Christine A. Gaylican and Volt Contreras*

Politicians in crime: Name names, Ebdane urged

By Christine O. Avendaño

THEY want names.

Opposition Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr., and Sergio Osmeña III yesterday demanded that Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane identify the politicians that he said were behind the recent spate of bank robberies in Metro Manila.

Ebdane's claim was "irresponsible," Osmeña told reporters. If the police chief didn't back it up with names, he said, "all politicians opposed to the administration would be under suspicion."

The senator added: "I think he was ordered to issue such statement."

He chided Ebdane for "(opening) his mouth too soon," and reminded him that Interior and Local Government Secretary Joey Lina had tagged the Kuratong Baleleng Gang for the Makati Citibank Center heist on Aug. 25.

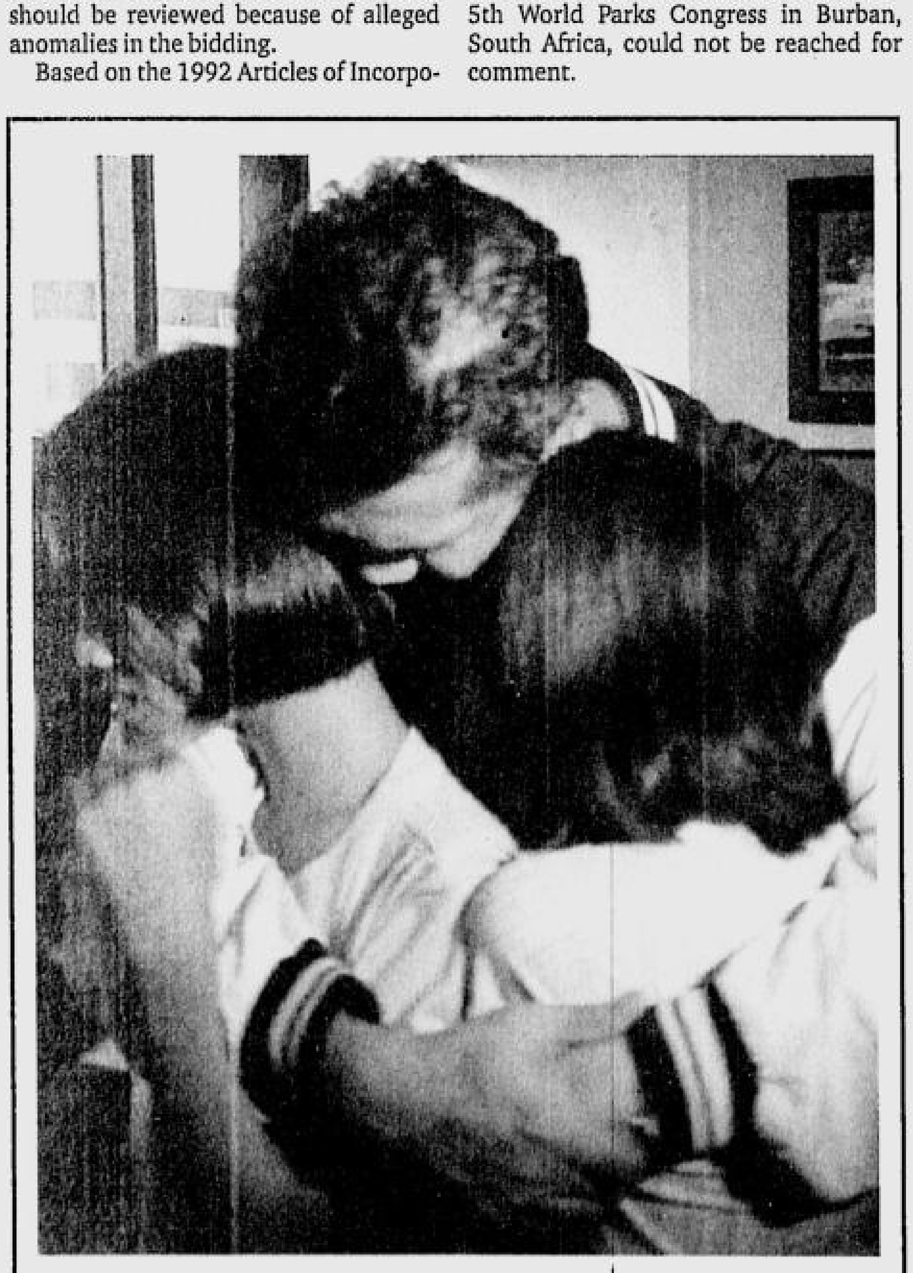
Even ousted President Joseph Estrada described as "crazy" the government's call for an investigation of politicians in connection with the robberies, and even several kidnappings.

"I cannot see the logic behind (blaming) politicians for the rising crime rate," Estrada said. He knew for a fact, he said, that big-time criminals "would rather enjoy their loot," and that the closest they would get to politics was to contribute to candidates' funds.

He suspected that the government was fanning the issue to draw attention away from the Jose Pidal scandal, or to burden opposition candidates, especially Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Estrada said Lacson was unlikely to have connections with drug syndicates, because "he is angry at drug lords."

The ex-President must have known that the PNP was next eyeing politicians suspected of involvement in the drug trade. *With reports from Armand Nocum and Alcuin Papa*



HOMECOMING

Yellow ribbons are nowhere to be found but the homecoming of dental technician Ramiro Esmero after seven years in a Saudi jail is no less emotional. He is hugged by daughters Maryjoy (left) and Mika upon arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Esmero arrived with Joselito Alejol yesterday. They were accused of murdering a Saudi policeman in 1997 and were later acquitted. They were released after being given 70 lashes last month as punishment for other offenses. Another co-accused who was also acquitted remains in Saudi Arabia.

ROGER MARGALLO

DFA sending team of lawyers to Dubai to help raped Pinay

By Gerald G. Lacuarta and Martin P. Marfil

THE GOVERNMENT will send a team of lawyers to the United Arab Emirates for the legal defense of a 29-year old Filipina rape victim who has been in jail since May 26, Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople said yesterday.

"We are now ready to send a legal team from Manila that has been in the Middle East before and has handled similar cases. We are also ready to engage the services of local lawyers," Ople said.

But Ople denied reports the victim was abandoned by the Philippine embassy there. The DFA, he said, was aware of the case but "as a matter of policy and simple decency, we try not to publicize cases such as this in order to protect the privacy of the victim and in order not to prejudice the case."

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas yesterday also denied that the government was not helping the abused Filipina overseas worker identified only as "Grace."

In a statement, Sto. Tomas said she was informed by Grace's lawyers that she could now be released on bail while awaiting hearing of her case.

The Migrante Sectoral Party on Monday revealed the plight of "Grace" who sought the group's help after Philippine Embassy officials allegedly left her at the mercy of the UAE courts without legal assistance.

A native of Kiangan, Ifugao, Grace was abducted and raped by an Emirati, identified as Khalifa Hassan Khalifa, on May 16 in a desert area in Sharjah, UAE, 50 km from Dubai.

Reports said Khalifa, who introduced himself as policeman, offered a ride to Grace and a Filipina companion who were waiting for a cab after attending a friend's birthday party at Riga, Deira in Dubai. Khalifa instead drove his car to the desert.

Sensing danger, Grace's companion, who was seated at the back, jumped off the car and called police for help. Police found Grace 15 minutes later unconscious, raped and with torn clothes. The police caught the fleeing Khalifa five minutes later.

After the incident, Grace was hospitalized for 10 days. She was later jailed on charges of intoxication and adultery.

But Migrante said the charges were trumped-up to discredit Grace and bolster the defense of Khalifa who was freed on bail last Sept. 11.

NPA rebs kill 2 cops in Ilocos attack

COMMUNIST guerrillas killed two policemen, stole cash and firearms, and burned down a police station and a bus in separate attacks, authorities said Tuesday.

Police said some 30 New People's Army guerrillas attacked the police station in Sta. Lucia town, Ilocos Sur, just before midnight Monday, killing two officers and wounding two others.

The rebels set fire to the building and to a police vehicle before fleeing with an undetermined number of firearms from the armory.

Military spokesperson Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said army troops have reinforced police teams and were pursuing the attackers.

Senior Supt. Mario Subagan, Ilocos Sur provincial police chief, said he has ordered the relief of the town police chief, Crescenciano Villanueva, pending an investigation of the incident. *Norman Bordadora, with reports from AP and AFP*

ADVANCE BORROWING

Gov't eyes $900-M loans ahead of '04 polls

CAMACHO

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE GOVERNMENT plans to borrow $900 million later this year, representing half of its 2004 external funding requirement, on concern that foreign creditors might shun the Philippines in the run-up to next year's elections.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho explained that this was just one of the precautions being undertaken by the government so "it would not be exposed to the unstable market arising from next year's elections."

"The financial challenge is next year's foreign borrowing requirement of $1.8 billion. With the upcoming May elections, we can expect some volatility in the first quarter and a half and if there are market opportunities to raise next year's borrowings earlier, we may do so by November or December," Camacho said.

He said the government wants to pre-fund its foreign debt requirements for 2004 to avoid election jitters in the months leading to the May elections.

Camacho disclosed that international bankers and investors have already expressed concern over the 2004 elections during his meetings with them in London, Paris, and Singapore last week.

They are particularly worried about the continuity of reforms undertaken by the current administration whose term would end in May 2004, he said.

The government still has to raise $225 million in the next two months to narrow down the projected budget deficit this year while the National Power Corp. needs to borrow $250 million before the year ends.

Camacho said that the front-loading of foreign borrowings has been done over the last two and a half years with the most recent undertaken last year before the US-Iraq war.

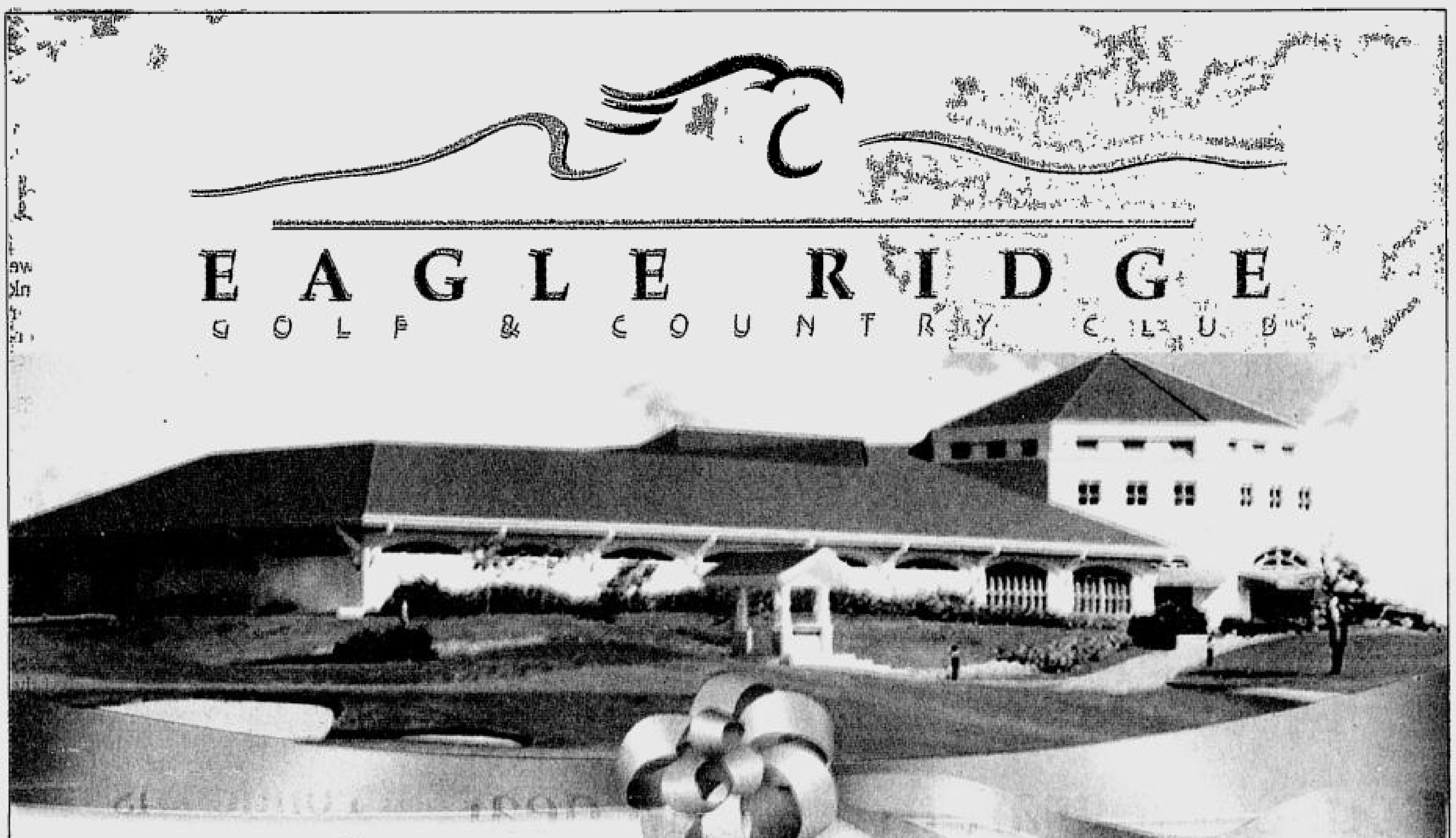
Based on their discussions, Camacho said foreign businessmen remain upbeat on the prospects of the Philippine economy despite recent political events such as the July 27 Oakwood mutiny and the "Jose Pidal" controversy.

He said these foreign businessmen were investors in emerging markets and were willing to take more political risks.

"There is a strong demand for investing in Philippine debt papers and we have all the flexibility we need to borrow more from abroad," Camacho said.

He said this was evident in the rise in foreign portfolio investments in the local stock exchange and the tightening spreads on Philippine bonds over the last two months.

"Only the dollar market remains volatile because this is dictated more by domestic sentiment compared to the stock market and global bond market which are driven by foreign sentiment," Camacho said.



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TIME	ACTIVITIES	LOCATION
6:00 AM	Start of Registration	Dye, Aoki and Main Golf Clubhouse
7:00 - 11:00 AM	Start of Fore by Four Inaugural Tournament Sequential Tee-Off	AOKI, DYE, FALDO, NORMAN COURSES
6:00 - 11:00 AM	Brunch	Dye, Aoki and Main Golf Clubhouse
5:00 - 6:30 PM	Awarding/ Dinner for golfers	Dye, Aoki and Main Golf Clubhouse
6:30 - 7:00 PM	Shuttle golfers from AOKI & DYE to MAIN	Aoki/Dye Lobby
8:00 - 11:00 AM	Basic Swimming Course	SWIMMING POOL
11:00 - 12:00 NN	Exhibition	
9:00 - 11:00 AM	Tennis Age Group Competition	TENNIS COURT
11:00 - 12:00 NN	Tennis Clinic	
2:00 - 3:00 PM 4:30 - 5:30 PM	Tennis Exhibition - Men's SGL - Men's DBS's	
10:00 - 12:00 NN	Badminton Exhibition - Men's SGL - Ladies' SGL - Mixed DBL's	BADMINTON COURT
2:00 - 3:00 PM	Badminton Clinic	
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Bowling Team Eliminations	BOWLING ALLEY
4:30 - 6:00 PM	Step Ladder Finals	
1:00 - 3:00 PM	Billiards Step Ladder	BILLIARD HALL
5:00 - 6:00 PM	Competition	
3:00 - 3:45 PM	Holy Mass	Family Clubhouse Porte Cochere
3:45 - 3:55 PM	Speeches	
3:55 - 4:00 PM	Ribbon Cutting	Family Clubhouse Porte Cochere
4:00 - 4:30 PM	Blessing	Family Clubhouse,Golf Clubhouse, Sports Clubhouse
4:30 - 4:40 PM	Coin Tossing	Lobby Family Clubhouse
4:40 PM	Opening Number	Lobby Family Clubhouse
5:00 - 5:30 PM	AquaBelle Show	Swimming Pool
5:30 - 7:00 PM	DINNER	Bowling Café, Basketball Court, Sports Clubhouse Lobby Ballroom & Lobby of Family Clubhouse Multipurpose Viewdeck
7:00 PM	Live Concert	Main Golf Clubhouse Porte Cochere
8:30 PM	Grand Fireworks	

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Israel softens on Arafat expulsion

JERUSALEM—Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom ruled out the immediate expulsion of Yasser Arafat on Monday after an international backlash, as senior Palestinians reacted furiously to a threat to assassinate their leader.

At the United Nations, the UN's special envoy to the Middle East jumped to the defense of the veteran Palestinian leader who has been at the forefront of the Middle East political landscape for the past three decades.

Addressing an open meeting of the UN Security Council after Israel made the expulsion threat last week; Terje Roed-Larsen said Arafat was the "legitimate leader" of the Palestinians.

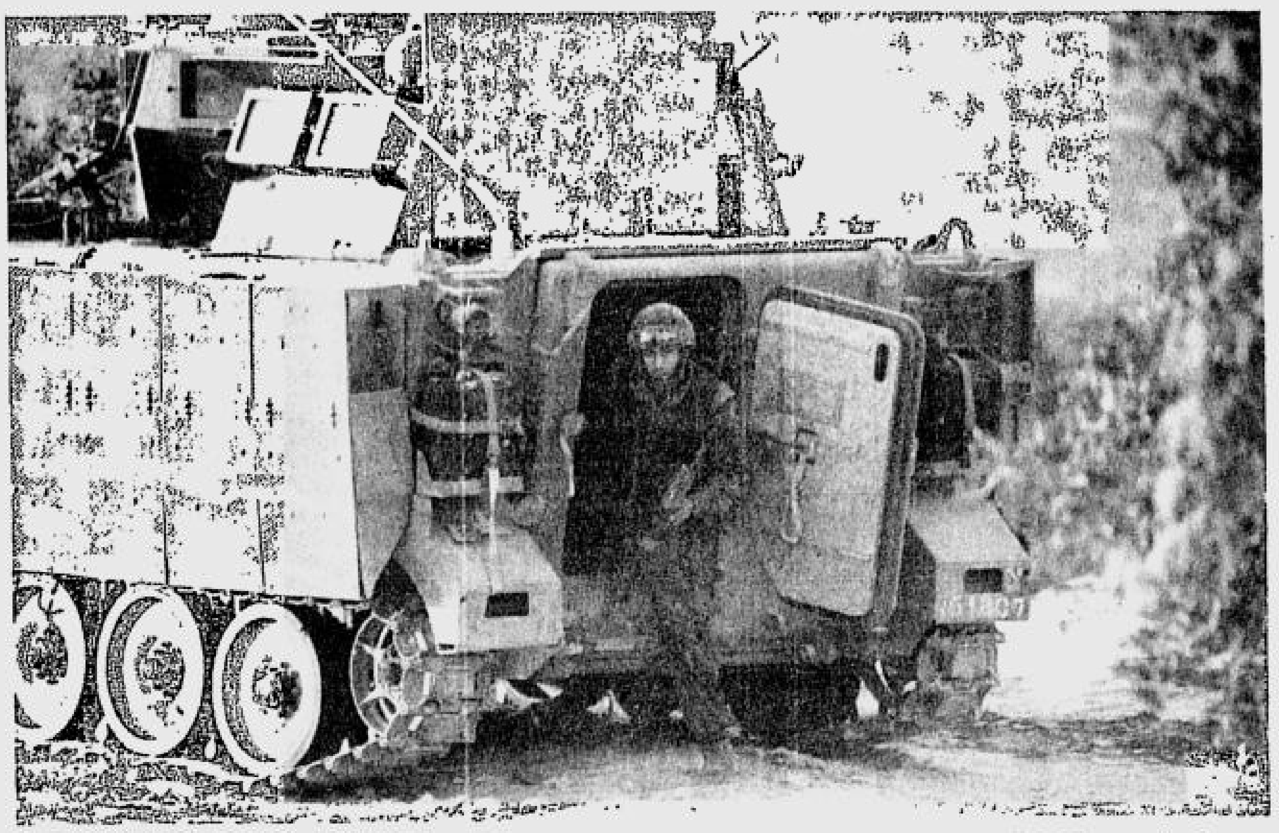
"He embodies Palestinian identity and national aspirations. He is now far from irrelevant," Roed-Larsen said, using the term used by the Israeli government to count out Arafat.

But Israel's UN ambassador, Dan Gillerman, insisted that Arafat's removal was the key to restarting the stalled internationally backed roadmap to Middle East peace.

He branded him "probably the world's most successful exporter of terrorism," prompting a walkout by the Palestinian delegates.

The United States, meanwhile, warned Israel that expelling or killing Arafat "would not help matters" as it pushed to salvage the roadmap championed by the United States, Russia, European Union and the United Nations.

"We have made it clear that expulsion, in any form, just would not help matters and only serve to give Arafat more (of) a world stage," said White House spokesperson Scott McClellan. "That includes expulsion or killing."



AN ISRAELI soldier comes out of an armored personnel carrier in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Thousands of people continued to gather outside Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's offices in Ramallah to express their support for the symbol of Palestinian nationalism, as Israel's Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said the Jewish state's decision to "remove" Arafat would not be carried out immediately. AFP

The Israeli stand on Arafat also ran into trouble in London.

Britain's Foreign Office summoned the Israeli ambassador, Zvi Shtauber, and told him his government's threat to expel or assassinate Arafat was "unacceptable."

Amid the pressure, Foreign Minister Shalom told reporters that "the cabinet decision is not for immediate action," without giving a timeframe.

The Israeli security cabinet's decision last week to approve Arafat's removal from his headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah has sparked widespread anger among Palestinians and international criticism.

Industry Minister Ehud Olmert, who is the official number two in the Israeli government, said over the weekend that Arafat's assassination was one of the "removal" options being considered by the Israelis.

But Shalom said that Olmert was expressing a personal opinion and not official government policy. "It's not the official policy of the Israeli government. It never has been," he said.

Mohammed Dahlan, security minister in outgoing Palestinian prime minister Mahmud Abbas' government, said the assassination threat was being taken seriously.

Israel was waiting for the right moment to assassinate Arafat, Dahlan told AFP, warning that any such move would be a "serious error." *AFP*

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Afghan rebel leader slain in clashes

SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan—A senior rebel commander was among 15 Taliban fighters killed in overnight clashes with US-led forces and government troops, Afghan officials said on Monday.

The US military confirmed the death toll, saying US and allied warplanes backed Afghan and US-led forces on the ground hunting remnants of the ousted Taliban and al-Qaida network.

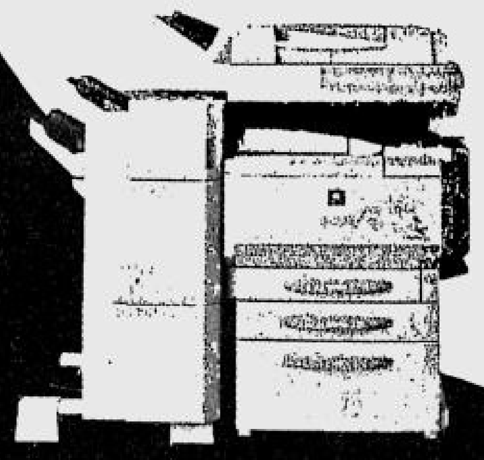
"Fifteen Taliban were killed, including Mullah Abdur Rahim, in Maruf District," Afghan Foreign Ministry official Khalid Khan Achakzai told Reuters in the town of Spin Boldak in southern Kandahar, near the Pakistan frontier.

Rahim was a senior Taliban commander who controlled the hardline militia's forces in southern Afghanistan, where Taliban attacks have risen alarmingly in recent weeks.

He was wounded earlier this year in a clash with Afghan forces in Spin Boldak, and a deputy was appointed to assist him by the fugitive Taliban leader Mullah Omar.

Khalid Pashtun, an official in the southern Kandahar province where Maruf is located, later confirmed Rahim was among the dead.

"I can confirm that . . . Abdur Rahim has been killed. He is the leader of that group. His body is still in Maruf District, and we will try to bring his body back to Kandahar (city) airport." *Reuters*



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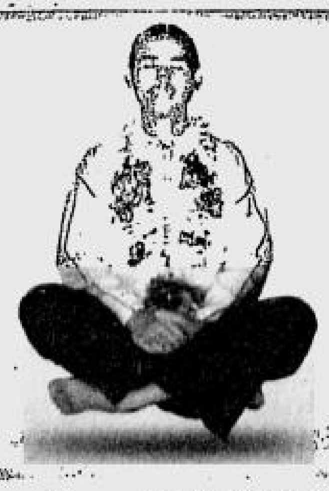

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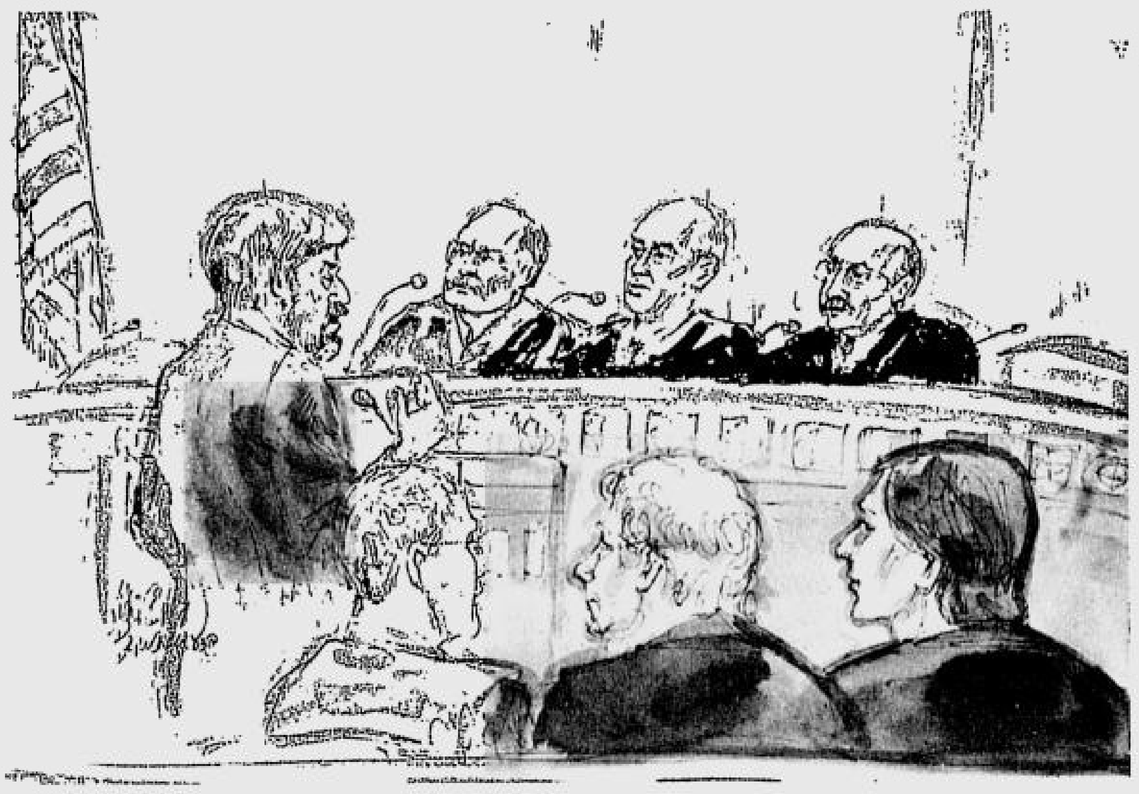
US court postpones California recall polls



IN THIS artist's sketch, Mark Rosenbaum, left, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, argues for a delay in the scheduled Oct. 7 recall vote on California Gov. Gray Davis before the three-judge US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, in Pasadena Thursday. AP

LOS ANGELES—A US appeals court Monday dropped a political bombshell by postponing the Oct. 7 polls aimed at ousting California's governor, because some voters would be forced to use a flawed voting system.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a lower court decision that the vote should go ahead to honor the will of the people despite a battery of legal challenges, mostly brought by supporters of Gov. Gray Davis.

But the court delayed implementation of the decision—which revives the specter of the 2000 presidential electoral fiasco in the southern state of Florida—for seven days pending expected appeals to the US Supreme Court.

"(California's) secretary of state is enjoined from conducting an election on any issue on Oct. 7, 2003," the judges said, sending shock waves through the most populous US state. They did not set a new polling date.

The move is expected to deal a blow to Republican movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger and the other 132 candidates vying to replace the Democratic governor blamed by foes for the state's financial woes.

The ruling by three judges sitting in Pasadena was based on fears that the state's aged punch-card voting system—the same type that caused Florida's electoral chaos—was error-prone and would distort the vote.

The suit brought by liberal groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was the last of 12 challenges to the vote.

The court ruled that unequal voting systems across the state would violate the US Constitution and raised "almost precisely the same issue" as the Supreme Court case of Bush v. Gore that decided the 2000 election.

The issue of "hanging chads" caused by the defunct machines left the US presidency hanging in the balance amid doubts over whether George W. Bush or former vice president Al Gore had won the 2000 elections.

"The inherent defects in the system are such that approximately 40,000 voters who travel to the polls and cast their ballot will not have their vote counted at all," the judges wrote in a 66-page ruling.

The judges said it was "virtually undisputed" that the prescored punch-card voting system, which is being phased out but is still in use in some California counties, was more prone to error than others.

The judges said they would be "remiss" if they did not ensure that the election was fair at a time when the United States is "attempting to persuade the people of other nations of the value of free and open elections."

"Thus, we are especially mindful of the need to demonstrate our commitment to elections held fairly, free of chaos, with each citizen assured that his or her vote will be counted, and with each vote entitled to equal weight." The ruling is seen as a boost for Davis' bid to keep his job in the vote ordered in July after his Republican opponents triggered the recall process. Davis hailed the judges' decision but said he would keep campaigning pending appeals.

"Right now I'm assuming the election will be on October 7 and I'm going to continue assuming that until we get a final determination from the courts," he said while campaigning here with former president Bill Clinton.

The ACLU—which wanted the polls delayed until punch-card machines, which they claim disadvantage minority voters, are replaced—welcomed the decision as "a masterpiece" and a victory for equal opportunity.

Analysts believe that if the vote is put off until presidential primary elections on March 2 as many expect, Davis would have a better chance of surviving as Democratic voters come out to support their party nationally.

A shell-shocked Schwarzenegger demanded that Secretary of State Kevin Shelley immediately "appeal this decision on behalf of the citizens who have exercised their constitutional right to recall Gray Davis, and who expect an election on October 7."

The action star, saying the court's move was politically-motivated, vowed to "continue to vigorously campaign for governor. The people have spoken, and their word should—and will—prevail," he said.

Other prominent Republicans, including former gubernatorial candidate Bill Simon and the man who launched and bankrolled the recall effort, Darrell Issa, also rounded on the decision, which came after millions of dollars have been spent on the very colorful electoral campaign.

Simon termed it an "outrageous interference with the rights of California voters and a transparent attempt to thwart the will of the people," while Issa said he was confident the ruling would be overturned.

A Los Angeles Times poll showed Friday that 50 percent of voters would oust Davis and that lieutenant governor Cruz Bustamante was leading Schwarzenegger as the favorite to replace Davis by 30 percent to 25. *AFP*

New leaders emerge from African junta

BISSAU—Guinea-Bissau's new junta pledged Monday to name a prime minister acceptable to all parties, a day after ousting president Kumba Yala in a bloodless coup in the small west African state.

Junta leader Verissimo Seabra Correia, the armed forces chief, met with about 100 representatives from political parties and civil society who agreed to allow the junta to choose a "civilian, independent and credible figure" as prime minister.

The meeting on plans to set up a transition council in the impoverished former Portuguese colony also led to the formation of a 16-member committee led by Bissau Archbishop Camnate Na Bsim.

Correia, who declared himself "interim" president on Sunday, said in a radio broadcast that the council would have a consultative role in setting up a transition government to be led by a civilian.

Bloodless coup

Sunday's bloodless coup, though condemned by the African Union (AU), the United Nations and many African countries, has been welcomed by many of Guinea-Bissau's 1.5 million inhabitants, who said they were fed up with the country's economic and political paralysis.

Civil servants' wages have not been paid for up to nine months, and the country has been waiting for long overdue legislative elections, called after Yala dissolved parliament last November.

The polls, delayed four times from their original February date, are due to be held next month in Guinea-Bissau, one of the world's poorest countries whose main export is cashew nuts.

The eight-nation Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), which held an emergency meeting in Lisbon of its ambassadors on Monday, urged elections for president as well as for parliament.

"The CPLP wants to support the full restoration of democracy in Guinea-Bissau," the group's executive secretary Joao Medicis told reporters. "The (continued) political presence of Kumba Yala is a decision which the people of Guinea should make."

Yala, 50, came under harsh criticism from the African Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights (RADDHO) on Monday.

President's mess

The Dakar-based group, while saying it "regretted" the weekend power grab in Guinea-Bissau, said in a statement Monday that the deposed president had done "absolutely nothing to prevent what has happened to him."

It added: "We owe it to the truth to recognize that president Kumba Yala, who was democratically elected, set about in a methodical and irresponsible way to destroy both the democratic institutions and the productive apparatus of Guinea-Bissau."

It said the country had been "totally drained" economically and its political institutions—including the parliament, Supreme Court and constitution—were "in tatters."

Amara Essy, the outgoing chairman of the AU's executive commission, said Monday that the coup ran counter to AU principles and that the 53-nation pan-African body would work closely with the regional Economic Community of West African States to restore constitutional order and stability in Guinea-Bissau.

South Africa also condemned the coup, the foreign ministry stating: "The unconstitutional transfer of power will not be tolerated by leaders of the African continent." *AFP*

Annan urges UN force in Liberia

UNITED NATIONS—UN Secretary General Kofi Annan recommended Monday the creation of a 15,000-strong UN force for Liberia to help reestablish peace in the war-torn West African nation.

The Security Council is expected to discuss the request Tuesday.

"Liberia remains highly unstable," Annan's request said, "as armed groups, militia and criminal elements operate throughout the country."

Rebels and the government reached a peace deal this month with the departure into exile of Charles Taylor, ending 14 years of nearly continuous war.

Annan's request to the Security Council said that UN troops are needed, "to protect civilians under imminent threats of physical violence" during continuing postwar unrest.

Additional details of Annan's request for a larger UN role in restoring order in Liberia were to be released on Tuesday.

Annan said that while the overall security situation in Liberia is improving, serious challenges remain in keeping order.

Officials have said UN forces would include Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) troops already in place in Liberia. They would be reinforced mainly by troops from South Africa and Ethiopia, as well as soldiers from Pakistan and Bangladesh. *AFP*

SPINNER

A woman spins a wheel while working with silk fiber at the Hotan Atlas silk factory in Hotan on the southern edge of the Taklimakan Desert in northwest China's Xinjiang province. The only handwork silk factory in Hotan, some 2,000 years of tradition is continued these days in this oasis town where once camel caravans came carrying goods from China bound for Europe, going on at least since the Roman Empire when silk, the principal Chinese export, was prized by fashionable Roman women. AFP

Canada parliament heads for key vote on gay marriages

OTTAWA—The political storm over gay marriage in Canada headed for a flashpoint on Monday, with opponents and proponents making last-minute pitches ahead of a key vote in Parliament scheduled for Tuesday.

The gay marriage debate dominated headlines and political discussion over the summer after the federal government decided not to appeal a provincial court decision that declared the heterosexual-only definition of marriage unconstitutional.

The opposition Canadian Alliance, which is against gay marriage, will try to embarrass the ruling Liberals on Tuesday by introducing an identical motion to one supported by cabinet in 1999.

That motion directed Parliament to preserve a definition of marriage as "the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others."

"It'll come down to how did you vote last time, how are you voting now and why did you change your mind," John Reynolds, who runs the Alliance's legislative agenda in the House of Commons, told Reuters.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien, asked why he supported the motion in 1999 but not now, shrugged: "Society evolved." *Reuters*

Troops search for foreigners abducted by Colombian rebs

BOGOTA—Some 2,000 troops and police with helicopters and tanks searched mountains in northern Colombia on Monday in an effort to find eight foreign tourists kidnapped by leftist rebels.

The hunt intensified as six other foreigners revealed they had been left behind by the rebels because they did not have proper walking shoes.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is believed to have seized the four Israelis, two Britons, one German and a Spaniard late Saturday from the group hiking near the Sierra Nevada mountains, about 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) north of Bogota.

Vice President Francisco Santos said he hopes the army will be able to rescue the foreign tourists.

"The young men will be going through a difficult time," Santos told reporters adding, "We are searching for them and hope to close off the rebels' exits."

Police operations chief General Luis Alfredo Rodriguez said a FARC commando unit had led the eight up the 6,000-meter (20,000 feet) high snow-flanked Sierra Nevada.

The Israeli captives were identified by authorities as Benny Daniel, 26; Orpaz Ohayun, 22; Ido Yosef Guy, 26; and Erez Altawil, 24. Officials said the other hostages were: Matthew Scott and Mark Henderson, of Britain; Reinhilt Weigl of Germany; and Asier Huegun Etxeberria of Spain.

One of the members of the group that had been left behind, Australian James Schultz, told local media the tourists had been waken up by four armed men and ordered to follow them. A few seconds later, the 14 hikers were met by about 15 armed rebels.

"The eight who were taken away had mountain boots," recalled Schultz. "The six of us only had sandals."

Schultz said the tourists were well treated.

Still, authorities were not amused and put part of the blame on the foreigners themselves.

"One has to wonder: what the hell were those guys doing in that very difficult area?" fumed Vice President Santos. *AFP*

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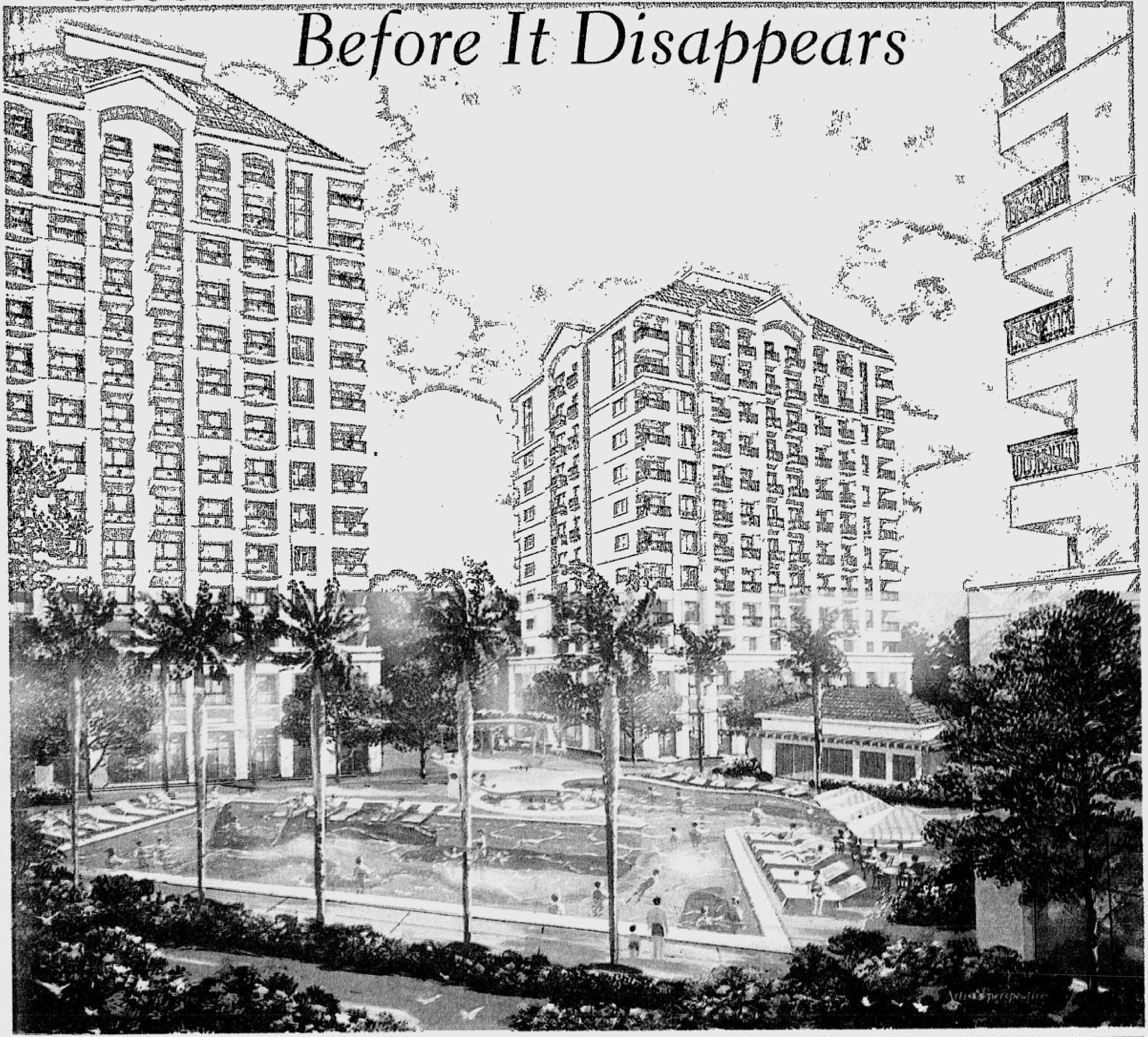

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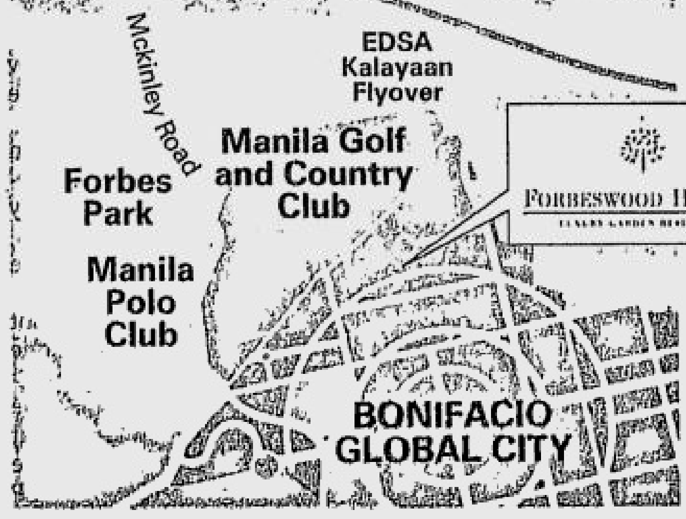
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NPAs raid Ilocos Sur police station

By Leoncio Balbin Jr., *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

STA. LUCIA, Ilocos Sur—Two policemen were killed while five others were wounded after about 30 suspected New People's Army rebels attacked and burned the police station here shortly before midnight on Monday.

Chief Supt. Claudio Cabreros, Ilocos regional police chief, identified the fatalities as SPO2 Ricardo Isidro, 45, and SPO2 Simeon Aquino, 41.

Wounded were SPO4 Felipe Doles, PO3 Alberto Barbado, PO2 Andrew Rabang, PO2 Rodrigo Masanda and SPO4 Danilo Bilaoen.

Only PO3 Jose Arce escaped unharmed from the attack staged at about 11 p.m. Monday. The police station was along the national highway and near the Sta. Lucia town hall.

Reports from the Army's Northern Luzon Command said the rebels were led by a certain Ka Deo of the NPA's Komiteng Larangang Gerilya under the unit codenamed "De Lara."

Cabreros said their reports indicated that at least eight rebels were already near the town hall as early as 8 p.m.

"We were informed that they had dinner and even spent time singing in front of a videoke machine in a store just across the town hall. They probably waited for the right time to attack," Cabreros told the INQUIRER.

He said the suspects' companions, aboard two jeepneys and a Toyota Tamaraw FX van, arrived at about 11 p.m. The rebels proceeded to the police station and shot Aquino, the desk officer on duty, who died instantly.

Arce said the suspects were looking for Isidro who was then resting in a bed in their quarters.

Target

"I was about to put toothpaste in my toothbrush when I heard people shouting 'Isidro' about three times. Then we heard a burst of gunfire," Arce told the INQUIRER.

The suspects shot Isidro and the other policemen after Isidro acknowledged the rebels' call.

Arce was unharmed because he was at the station's kitchen during the attack. He said he immediately ran and sought cover when the 30-minute attack started.

Cabreros said the rebels could be only looking for Isidro and did not intend to kill the other policemen.

Cabreros said they are investigating why the rebels wanted Isidro killed.

The rebels, after attacking the policemen, then poured gasoline on the station and burned it by firing an M203 grenade launcher.

The rebels took seven M-16 Armalite rifles from the station and fled toward the town's eastern direction.

Intelligence gap

Cabreros blamed the police's "intelligence gathering gap" for the attack. He admitted that their intelligence gathering activities and security were more focused on the 14 interior towns of Ilocos Sur where rebels are mostly sighted.

"We cannot cover every square inch of our area," Cabreros said.

Insp. Cresencio Villanueva, Sta. Lucia police chief, said the police received reports of rebel movements in Barangay Alincaoeg last month and reported these to their officials.

Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., Philippine National Police chief, came to the town on Tuesday to inspect the attack site.

Ebdane said he already ordered Cabreros, the PNP intelligence and investigation division chief, and the regional Criminal Investigation and Detection Group to immediately investigate and establish the motive for the attack. Ebdane also ordered the police to pursue the rebels.

Mayor Ferdinand Hernaez condemned the attack and called this an "act of terrorism."

"Their motive was destruction. They burned the police station and killed innocent policemen," Hernaez said.

Peace and order

He said the incident would severely affect the peace and order situation of the town.

Hernaez's father, former Mayor Teodoro Hernaez, was gunned down by suspected NPA rebels while attending the barangay fiesta of Namatican in April 2001.

Isidro's wife Dolores said she did not know why her husband was killed. She said her husband had no known enemies but he told her that two men and a woman had been tailing him before the Monday attack.

Dolores said she did not believe that the attackers were rebels because her husband did nothing to offend the rebels.

NPA attacks have become bolder in recent weeks following orders from rebel leaders to step up offensives against government targets.

The NPA has been accused by the military of offering P20,000 per month to entice recruits who include teenagers.

The rebels had denied using minors in combat.

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Gov't studies urged on toxic waste deaths

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A top environment official in Central Luzon said the health problems of people living near two former American military bases in Pampanga and Zambales cannot be directly attributed to the presence of and exposure to toxic wastes "unless appropriate studies are conducted by competent agencies."

Lormelyn Claudio, regional director of the Environmental Management Bureau, issued this statement after two former Subic Naval Base workers, before dying in late August, claimed that they contracted illnesses after their exposure to hazardous and toxic substances in the base for more than 20 years.

The former workers' story appeared in the INQUIRER on Monday. Claudio, in a letter to the INQUIRER, confirmed though that studies and investigations "revealed that, indeed there are contaminated sites within the former military installations in Pampanga and Zambales."

Contamination levels in these areas have exceeded the stringent soils screening criteria and the Philippine national standards for drinking water, she said.

The late former base workers Juan Ortiz Sr., 71, and Vicente Reyes, 65, earlier maintained they contracted asbestosis and showed medical records confirming they acquired malignant *mesothelioma*, a rare cancer of the thin membranes lining the abdominal cavities surrounding the internal organs.

Their employment records showed they worked at the Subic Naval Base's public works center and naval magazine for 24 and 27 years, respectively.

In their handwritten testimony, both said their tasks required them to handle, remove and strip asbestos, which was used in Clark and Subic as insulators. They said they worked without protective gear.

Citing information from the US Environmental Protection Agency, the People's Task Force for Bases Cleanup said asbestos is a known human carcinogen.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Negros execs seek wildlife protection

DUMAGUETE CITY—Top provincial officials here are calling on the police and the public to help in the implementation of laws designed to protect the dwindling wildlife of Negros Oriental.

Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz said the police should seriously enforce the national law and the provincial ordinance that ban hunting because it is now apparent that wildlife in the province is dwindling.

He said those who would not heed the request to stop hunting and other activities that harm wildlife will be prosecuted.

Arnaiz said he assigned Vice Gov. Jose Baldado to take charge of the campaign for wildlife protection.

Baldado, an environmentalist, said he created a core group that would spearhead the planning and information drive. This group was composed of government and private entities whose mandate includes the preservation and protection of the ecology, he said.

Baldado said it had been two years since the provincial board passed the ordinance that banned hunting but many law enforcers remained ignorant about it.

He said police recently confiscated rare birds being sold in the Dumaguete public market but failed to arrest and prosecute the one selling them.

Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

Dengue kills 11 in C. Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Eleven people, mostly children, in Central Luzon have died of the dengue virus, which has afflicted at least 1,246 people in the last eight months, the regional Department of Health said in a report.

Although the number of cases rose by 35 percent compared to last year's January-August period (807 cases), Dr. Ethelyn Nieto, DOH regional director, said there were still no reported outbreaks in the region.

Pampanga has the highest number of dengue-related deaths at five. Bulacan has four fatalities while Nueva Ecija and Aurora have one each, the report showed.

Dengue fever is transmitted by day-biting *Aedes* mosquitoes.

Citing data gathered until Aug. 30, the DOH said Pampanga also accounted for the most cases at 541. Bulacan reported 246 cases, Nueva Ecija, 225, Zambales, 101, Tarlac, 73, Bataan, 32, and Aurora, 26.

However, the DOH observed clustering or the occurrence of three or more cases in an area during the past four weeks.

In Pampanga, these were in Barangays Pampang, Marisol and Bagumbayan in Angeles City; Sapang Maisac in Mexico and Filipiniana in Mabalacat.

In Bulacan, incidents were clustered in Barangay Pala-Pala in San Ildefonso town.

Children aged 10 and below comprised 52 percent of the total dengue victims.

The number of incidents in the region started to increase by July, the report showed.

Of all provinces, only Zambales showed a decline in cases by more than half from last year's 232.

"Though still far below the previous highs experienced in 2001 (at more than 4,900 cases), this year may surpass last year's total of 1,632 cases," Dr. Jessie Fantone, DOH surveillance unit head, said.

"Cleaning up is very essential in the campaign against dengue," Nieto said. She said dengue-carrying mosquitoes thrive in clear stagnant water and breed near human dwellings.

She urged residents to eliminate sources of breeding sites such as rubber tires, tin cans, empty bottles and pots; cover drums and other waste storage facilities; and clean flower vases thoroughly at least once a week.

The symptoms of dengue are fever, severe headache, joint pains, rashes and severe bleeding. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

GMA sends emissary to negotiate on federalism

COTABATO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has sent an emissary to North Upi town in Maguindanao to discuss with members of the shadowy Indigenous Peoples Federal Army (IPFA) their demand to change the current form of government to a federal one.

Ms Macapagal recently endorsed for the first time the shift to a federal government, which enjoys strong backing in Mindanao and Visayas.

A T'duray native source, who refused to be named, told the INQUIRER Monday that the emissary from Malacañang was building up links with IPFA leaders for possible negotiations over their demand.

The source said the emissary met with IPFA chief Roger Adamat alias Fedrev.

"The emissary, after their meeting on Saturday afternoon, returned to Manila to report the progress of his mission," the source said.

The IPFA had been accused of being behind the series of bomb scares in key cities of Mindanao and in Manila last year. It has proposed before Malacañang officials a change in the form of government to federalism.

Adamat, in a three-page statement given to the INQUIRER, confirmed the report but he did not give details on his meeting with the Malacañang emissary.

"We, the Indigenous Peoples, would like to assert a culturally appropriate delineation of Peoples' Federal States nationwide. The mainstream populace or the Christian must be given federal states. The Bangsamoro must be granted with federal Islamic states," Adamat said. *Rosa-May de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

'Heroism' of senators who rejected bases pact recalled in East Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—The "heroism" 12 years ago of members of the Philippine Senate who rejected the extension of the US military bases' stay in the Philippines for another 50 years still deserves tribute, according to a militant group here.

"There is a need to look back and reflect upon that shining hour when the Senate united with the Filipino people in reasserting national sovereignty and independence," said Melvin Anino, Eastern Visayas secretary general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Sinirangan Bisayas.

Anino said that the Senate decision on Sept. 16, 1991 "remains significant because of a growing defense alliance between the Philippines and the United States through the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and the Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement (MLSA)."

Anino said that while it is true that some of those who opposed the renewal of the bases treaty had later supported the ratification of the VFA, what they did 12 years ago still deserves tribute.

"That was a glorious moment for the Filipino people and the struggle for independence," Anino said.

The "Magnificent 12" senators who voted against the extension of the US bases stay in the country were Joseph Estrada, Wigberto Tañada, Agapito Aquino, Juan Ponce Enrile, Teofisto Guingona Jr., Sotero Laurel, Ernesto Maceda, Orlando Mercado, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Rene Saguisag, Jovito Salonga and Victor Ziga.

The VFA, ratified by the Senate in 1999, allows the resumption of war games and regular visit of US troops.

At present, some 2,000 US Marine and Navy personnel are here in the country to participate in an eight-day training exercise with around 600 Filipino troops at the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga, Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija and Ternate in Cavite.

The exercise reportedly aims to improve the readiness skills and inter-operability between Filipino and US troops. *Vicente Labro, PDI Visayas Bureau*

CALL FOR INNOVATIVE IDEAS!
Grant Competition

Open to proponents from: NGOs • People's Organizations • Community-Based Organizations • Foundations • Cooperatives • Academic Institutions • Civic Organizations

Proponents should partner with any of the following: government, private sector, and other civil society groups.

The 1st Philippine Development Innovation Marketplace
COUNTRY INNOVATION DAY
Making services work for the poor

The World Bank Group, in partnership with the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO), League of Corporate Foundations (LCF), Makati Business Club (MBC), Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Embassy of Japan (EOJ), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is pleased to announce the launch of the 1st Philippine Development Innovation Marketplace (DIM). Dubbed "Panibagong Paraan", the DIM will provide support for innovative project ideas that address local development challenges.

The DIM 2004 competition invites concept papers responding to the theme "Making Services Work for the Poor".

Project entries should fall under any of the following sectoral areas identified in the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP): Health • Education • Environment • Water and Sanitation • Infrastructure • Energy • Housing • Agriculture and Agrarian Reform • Good Governance • Information and Communication Technology • Social Protection

Additional sponsored award categories, thus far, include Biodiversity / Climate Change and Community Efforts to Improve Education in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Start-up project grant award of up to about ₱1M* for implementation await winners with the best proposals based on the following evaluation criteria: Innovativeness • Partnerships • Sustainability • Replicability • Impact • Cost-effectiveness.

* Awards for Biodiversity / Climate Change projects can be up to ₱2.2M per project implementable over two years.

Philippine Development Innovation Marketplace
Panibagong Paraan
Making services work for the poor

Initial proposals should be in the form of a brief concept paper (maximum of 3 pages) following the format below:

Proponent Details
Organization / Institution
- *Contact Person*
- *Affiliation(s) with any coalition or network, if any*
- *Contact details: Address, Phone / FAX No., E-mail*

Primary Partner Organization(s)/ Institution(s):
- *Contact Person*
- *Contact details: Address, Phone / FAX No., E-mail*

Project Details
- *Title of the Project*
- *Project Implementation Site(s)*
- *Project Duration*
- *Projected Total Project Costs*
- *Projected Funding Request*
- *Projected Funding Counterpart*

Project Questions
1. What is the problem / issue your project is addressing?
2. What is your idea, and how does it address the problem(s) / issue(s) described above in terms of making services work for the poor?
3. Describe the activities / steps your project will undertake to achieve its objectives.
4. How is your idea innovative or different from existing approaches that are addressing the problem(s) / issue(s) you have described above?
5. How will your project contribute towards building or strengthening partnerships?
6. What are the expected results of your project? Whom will they benefit? How will they be measured?
7. How will your project be sustained even after the DIM funding?
8. How can your project be replicated in areas with similar conditions?

Concept papers must be submitted with one or two reference documents (e.g. SEC registration) establishing proof of the organization's legal personality. All entries must comply with all requirements for eligibility and format; non-compliant entries will be automatically rejected.
A multi-sectoral technical working group will evaluate eligible concept papers.

Concept papers in either English or Filipino can be sent by mail, hand delivered, faxed, or e-mailed to:

DIM 2004 Secretariat
World Bank Office 23rd Floor, The Taipan Place
Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Fax Number: (632) 917-3080 • E-Mail: dimp@worldbank.org

All entries must be received by 20 October 2003.

For further information, please email Ms. Chiara Bautista at cbautista@worldbank.org or call (632) 917-3038. Or visit our website at http://www.worldbank.org.ph

Finalists will be announced on the week of 17-21 November 2003 and will be asked to submit full proposals and participate in an exhibit and Knowledge Forum on 9-10 January 2004 at the Megatrade Hall, SM Megamall, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City. A board of distinguished jurors will determine the winners.

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League of Corporate Foundations
The World Bank
Australian Government AusAID
Canadian International Development Agency
IFC
Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
Makati Business Club
JAPAN
JICA
UNDP
Global Environment Facility
The Royal Netherlands Embassy
USAID

Lone guard thwarts NPA attack on cell site

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police here yesterday praised the courage of a security guard after he repulsed two suspected members of New People's Army (NPA) who tried to burn down a cellular phone tower in Barangay Banca-Baca, Victoria, Laguna over the weekend.

Laguna police director Senior Supt. Edwin Corvera said that on Sunday night, two unidentified men armed with long firearms approached security guard Roy Ignacio, who was guarding a Globe Telecom tower alone in the area, and identified themselves as local police officers.

The suspects told Ignacio that they were on routine inspection.

They then ordered the security guard to open the gate but Ignacio called the local police to confirm the identities of the suspect.

"When Ignacio tried to call the local police, one of the suspects climbed the perimeter fence, prompting the guard to fire a warning shot. The suspects, aware that the gun fire caused alarm within the area, just ran away, leaving an improvised Molotov bomb and four liters of gasoline," Corvera said.

Police said the suspects boarded a red Mitsubishi Lancer and sped towards Sta. Cruz town.

Another unidentified white car, apparently the suspects' backup, was also seen rushing away from the area.

Police believed that the suspects were NPA members.

They said the cellphone tower was maintained by a private contractor whose deal with the cellphone company ended two months ago. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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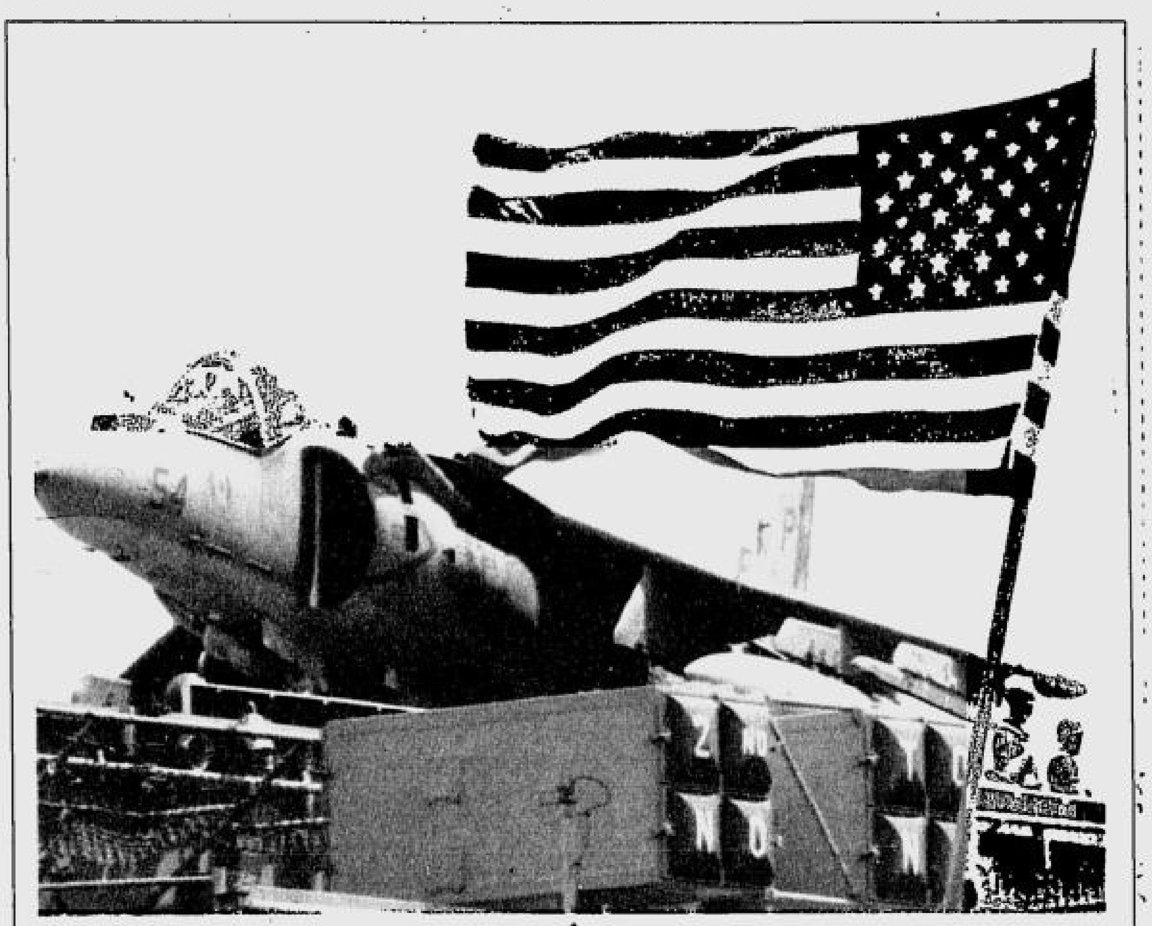

DENNIS SABANGAN/EPA

FIREPOWER
A US Harrier jet is guarded by US Marines on board the USS Esses docked at Subic Bay in preparation for military exercises with Philippine soldiers.

ROUNDUP

Food poisons 70

CALAPAN CITY—Some 70 pupils from the Sabat-Simaron Public Elementary School in Barangay Isabel in this city were rushed to the provincial hospital on Friday morning due to food poisoning. The children complained of unusual stomachache after eating hamburgers bought near the school. After vomiting and being given first aid, the pupils were declared safe by Oriental Mindoro provincial director Aristeo Baldos. An investigation is ongoing. The city government pledged to shoulder all medical expenses.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Alay Lakad scholars

CALAPAN CITY—The annual Alay Lakad was held in this city on Sunday to raise funds for the province's scholars. The program has already sponsored 14 college students. Two of them have already graduated. Gov. Bartolome Marasigan Sr. has asked government officials and personnel through a memorandum to give an annual contribution, which is salary deductible, as follows: governor as honorary chair of the Alay Lakad Foundation, P1,000; vice governor, P500; department and assistant department head, P100 each); division chiefs, P50; rank and file, P20; teachers/students, P10, and consultants, P150. Marasigan also asked for voluntary contributions from the private sector, non-government organizations and civic and religious groups. This year's Alay Lakad theme is: "Sa Matatag na Republika, Kabataan ay Pag-asa."

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Strong Republic schools

CALAPAN CITY—To reduce illiteracy in the province, Strong Republic Schools (SRS) will be put up in five towns in Oriental Mindoro. These are in Puerto Galera, San Teodoro, Baco, Victoria and Roxas. Beneficiaries will come from Kalahi areas (Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan). Target students are those from the rural poor, urban poor, indigenous people and rebel returnees aged 7 to 77. In every beneficiary-town, there will be five learning groups composed of 250 learners.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Confiscated drugs

CALAPAN CITY—Philippine National Police provincial director Senior Supt. Voltaire Calzado said 67 barangays in Oriental Mindoro had serious drug problem before they started their anti-illegal drug operations on June 16. Since then, he said, they have conducted 54 operations where they have arrested 45 drug pushers and seized 83.35 grams of shabu, five sticks of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. Voltaire presented 40 illegal drug detainees to Gov. Bartolome Marasigan. He claimed that the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Councils have played a big role in the arrest of illegal drug suspects.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

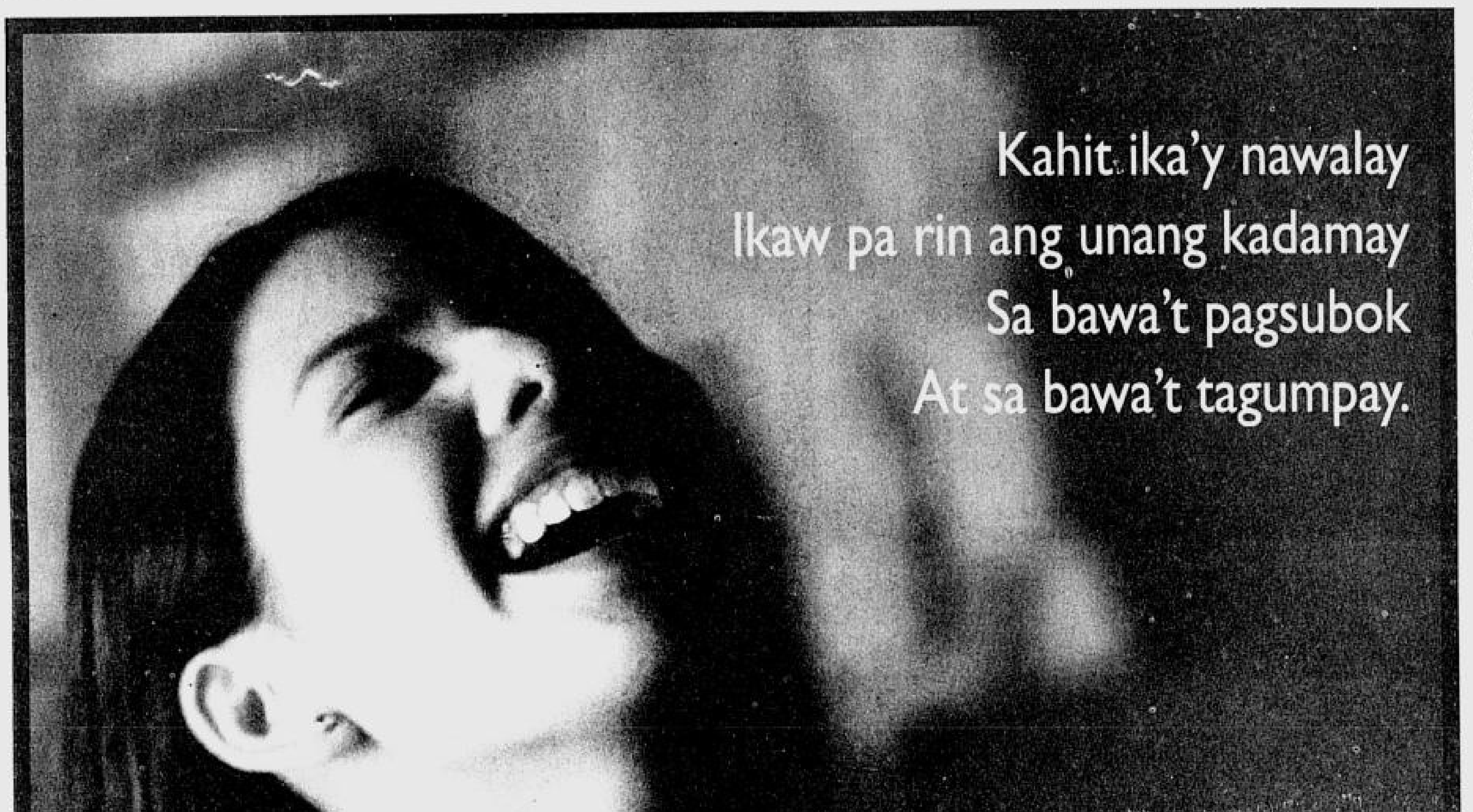
4 clubbed dead in Albay

LEGAZPI CITY—At least four persons were killed in separate incidents of club beating in this city and in an Albay town from July. All of the victims were women and attacked inside their own houses. Of the four, three were from this city. Police identified them as Eden Cuate, 21, of Barangay Bano; Laiza Martinez, of Barangay Bigaa, 15, high school student; and Florence Padilla, 23, married of Pandan, Ligao City. Two others were injured—Charlotte Vargas, 21, and Cathryn Ubalde, 22, of Central City Subdivision, Tahao Road. Vargas was clubbed inside her house in Barangay 17 on Sept. 7 and is still recuperating at the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital. Ubalde was clubbed at about 2 a.m. yesterday. Found inside the victim's room was a piece of coco lumber believed used in the clubbing. *Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Rice cargo ordered seized

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The Bureau of Customs has issued a seizure order for some 5,000 bags of smuggled rice worth P5 million. The contraband, loaded in six container vans, were seized by Bureau of Customs officials and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) at the Makar Wharf earlier this month after its shipper failed to present a transport permit. The imported rice was to be shipped out to Manila when customs and PCG officials were tipped off about it.

Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau


Kahit ika'y nawalay
Ikaw pa rin ang unang kadamay
Sa bawa't pagsubok
At sa bawa't tagumpay.

Para kay Jenny Santos, ang ate niyang nasa London ang laging una niyang takbuhan.
Kasi sa ilang minuto lang, nakapagpapadala na ito ng tuition sa tulong ng Western Union.

Parang si Ate mismo ang nag-abot kaya panatag ang loob nilang dalawa. At ngayong nagtapos na si Jenny, si Ate rin ang unang makakatanggap ng magandang balita!

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JUSTICE
JUSTICE FOR JUN P. PALA

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

PALA RALLY Supporters of slain broadcaster Jun Pala demonstrate outside the San Pedro Cathedral in Davao City where Mass was celebrated for his funeral. The killing of Pala remains unsolved.

Bacolod City gov't imposes curfew on minors

BACOLOD CITY—Starting last Monday, the Bacolod City government implemented a curfew on minors, prohibiting those below 18 years old to remain out on the city's streets and public places from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m., unless accompanied by an adult relative.

Owners of establishments operating during nighttime or 24 hours in Bacolod City have been notified by Mayor Luzviminda Valdez to strictly observe City Ordinance 331, entitled an Ordinance Providing Special Protection for Children During Nighttime by Imposing Curfew on Minors.

The measure was adopted by the city council in June and took effect Sept. 15, following the required publication period.

Councilor Ann Marie Palermo said she authored the ordinance to keep children at home during nighttime and away from either becoming the victims of or being enticed to take part in crime and illegal drug activities.

Valdez reminded the operators and managers of video clubs, karaoke bars, disco houses, Internet cafés, billiards centers and other similar establishments to impose the curfew ordinance on minors below 18 years of age, except those accompanied by their parents or legal guardians, or those with valid authority from their parents.

Refusal or failure to comply will subject the business establishment to revocation of its business permit and closure of its operations.

Valdez also called on all barangay officials to help implement C.O. 331 and seek the cooperation of parents. She said personnel of the Public Assistance Affairs Division would assist in the monitoring of the implementation of the ordinance.

She said policemen would sound the siren of their patrol cars in barangays under their jurisdiction at 9:45 p.m. to warn minors of the start of the curfew.

The ordinance states that violators will be issued citation tickets and be made to render community service of eight hours.

The curfew may only be suspended during the MassKara Festival, Charter Day celebration on Oct. 19, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve and barangay or annual fiestas.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Countdown for Justice

WAPILE

IT is exactly 492 days today since Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Wapile, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.

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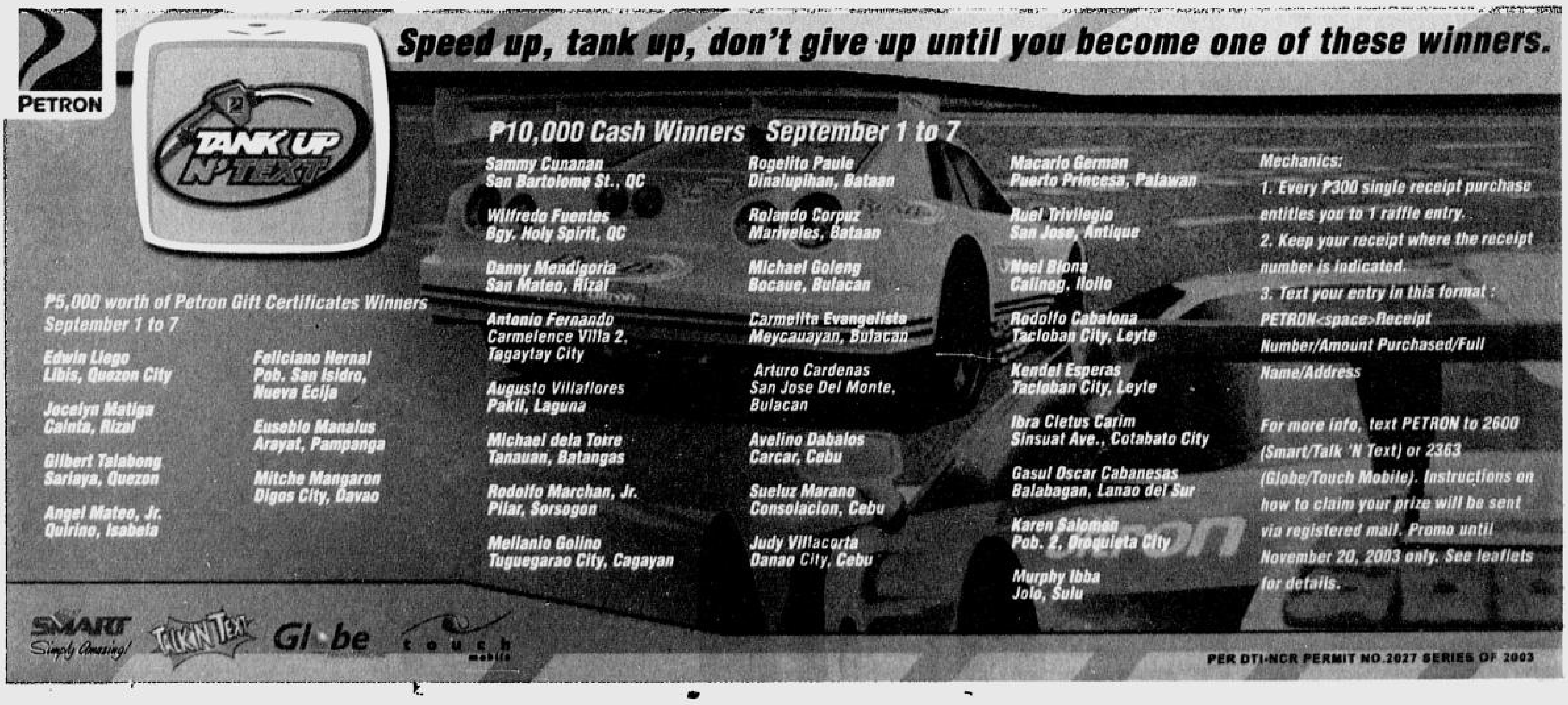
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The Real deal

EDITORIAL

JUDGE Manuel Real of the United States Federal District Court in Honolulu is playing god. Not the kind of god who dispenses rewards and punishment, but one who gives and takes away—on a whim. Real gave some 10,000 victims of human rights during the Marcos regime a taste of justice when he awarded them close to $2 billion in punitive and compensatory damages in 1993. Now he is taking everything away by blocking the efforts of the Philippine government to get hold of some $683 million being claimed by the Marcoses, first deposited in Swiss banks but now held in escrow by the Philippine National Bank.

Last Sept. 2, Real prohibited any bank or individual from transferring the money to the Philippine government, following a unanimous decision by the Philippine Supreme Court in July giving back to the government "the money stolen by the Marcos spouses." The Supreme Court's decision "violated any international sense of due process," Real said. "A review of the opinion of the Supreme Court indicates there has been no evidence presented to support such a determination as required by the lower court judgment," he said with reference to the finding that the money was ill-gotten.

To compensate the human rights victims, Real ordered that they be paid $150 million, as provided for in a compromise agreement entered into by the lawyers of the Marcoses and a group of human rights victims that broke off from the original group that filed the class suit. The agreement would not only allow the Marcoses to keep the bulk of their plunder, but also—and even more galling—absolve the dictator of all the crimes he committed during his rule.

That agreement was obviously a sell-out of the original class suit and the complainants. It converted a moral victory for human rights victims into a financial transaction that would lead to a revision of history. As Marie Hilao-Enriquez, secretary general of Selda to which majority of the victims belong, put it, "It's not about collecting damages. We are accusing Marcos of crimes against humanity." But the wonder of it all was that some of the people who were most vocal in denouncing Marcos as well as some of those who suffered most under martial law accepted it.

The agreement was approved by then President Estrada. Fortunately, it was declared illegal by the Sandiganbayan in 2000. Now Real would not only set aside the decision of the anti-graft court but even overrule the Supreme Court. Perhaps he ought to be reminded that US courts do not have limitless jurisdictions and the jurisdiction of the court in Honolulu does not extend across the Pacific and into the Philippines.

Real can threaten all he wants, but he cannot enforce his decision. The Swiss government is satisfied with the verdict declaring those deposits to be ill-gotten, and the money is now for the Philippine government to dispose of. And part of the Macapagal administration's plans is to allocate $200 million to the human rights victims.

If all that Real wants is to compensate the victims of human rights abuses, he should have no problem leaving the job to the government. Compensation for the victims is no longer an issue. In fact, they stand to get a better deal from their own government, if the administration's sharing proposal is passed by Congress.

But the last thing Real should expect is for the government to honor a deal that would reward Marcos' heirs by letting them keep the bulk of the loot of the conjugal dictatorship and give the dictator an honorable place in history.

Rights-holders

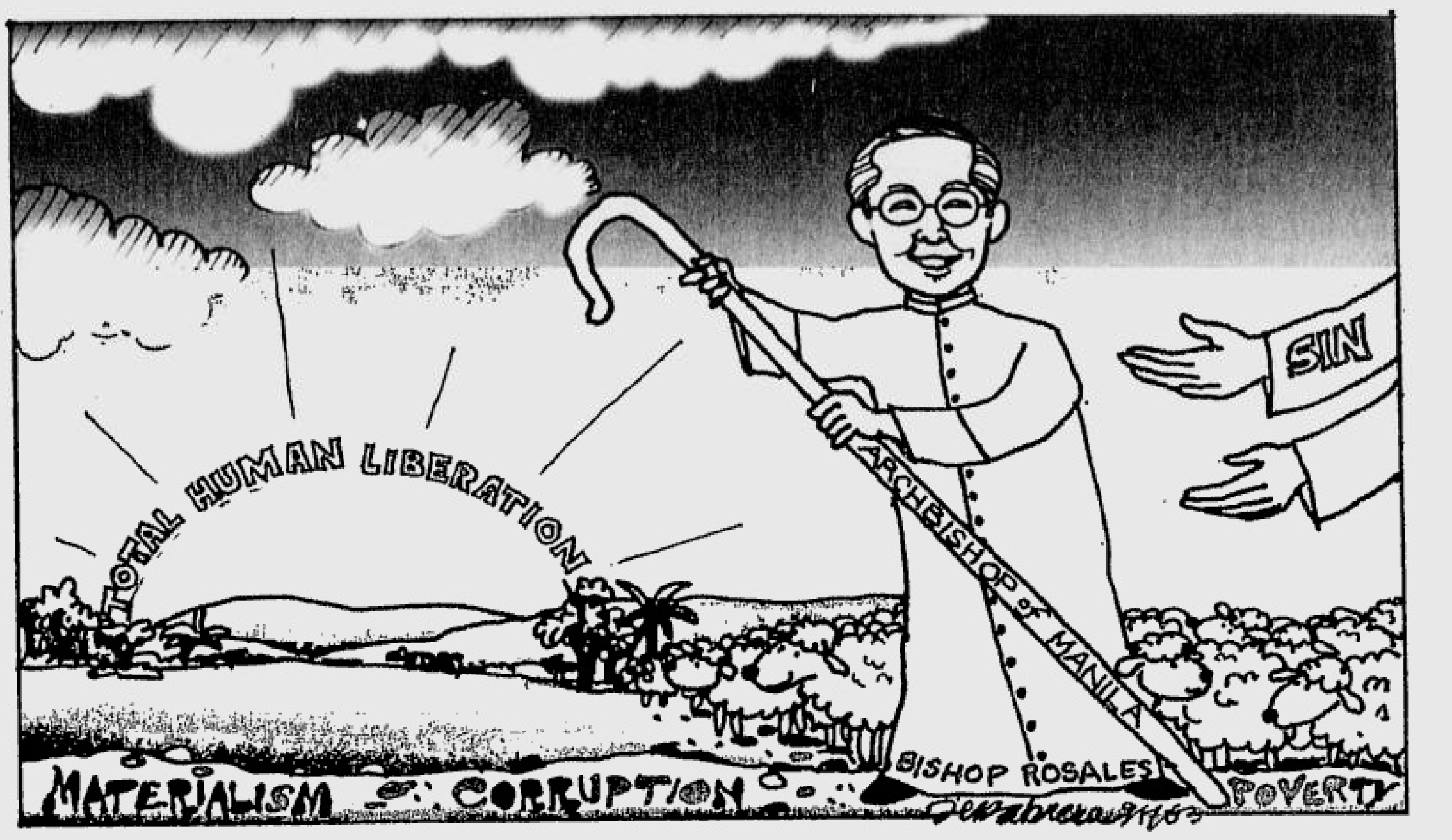
FOREIGN COMMENT

GIVE us our land back!" was the resounding message yesterday from the indigenous peoples representatives taking part in the World Parks Congress.

Noting that indigenous communities had been evicted and dispossessed throughout the world to make way for national parks and nature reserves, members of the delegation said it was not possible for them to move sacred sites such as mountains where a community leader had given his life in defense of his people.

A 13-point Indigenous Peoples Declaration to the congress said indigenous people should not be seen as mere "stakeholders" but as rights-holders.

The Star (Johannesburg, South Africa)



Why the double standard in the Senate?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

AT THE KAPIHAN sa Manila last Monday, we conducted an opinion survey at the end of the forum. After Jesus Santos, the lawyer of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, aired their side and answered questions, which included difficult ones, the audience was asked whether or not they believe that kid brother Ignacio Arroyo is Jose Pidal.

For the affirmative, not a single person raised a hand. But for the negative votes, there were a number. Which means that many Filipinos—at least, among the *kapihan* crowd, which is composed mostly of media people closely keeping track of current events—believe that our collective legs are being pulled.

There is no more hardworking lawyer defending FG Mike than Mr. Santos. He is all over town, in press forums and broadcast stations, defending his client and answering questions. But for all his gallantry, there are some questions he cannot answer. Only the client himself can. But while FG Mike allows himself to be photographed and shown on television, smiling and waving, he steadfastly refuses to answer questions. Instead, he hides behind his lawyers—first Ms Patricia Bunye and now Santos, who have been tasked to do the answering. But try as they might, they cannot answer all the questions. For the information needed to answer some of the questions, only the FG knows.

But the Arroyo brothers seem to have bound themselves to a Code of Silence, the *Omerta*, which, for those of you who like to watch movies or read books about gangsters, is the code of the Mafia. This is not to say that we have a Mafia family here; but only to point out that the Arroyo brothers' strict adherence to silence reminds people of the Mafia.

Frankly, I feel sorry for the First Family, more particularly the Arroyo brothers. They don't deserve all the aggravation. I think they are decent people, Iggy especially. But unfortunately, their steadfast silence makes people suspect that they are trying to hide something (Filipinos are a suspicious people), and when you try to hide something, you must have feelings of guilt.

* * *

Produce your evidence, some senators tell Sen. Panfilo Lacson, otherwise we will terminate the hearings. The Arnold Swarzenegger, the Terminator, of the Senate is Sen. Robert Barbers. He has been most ardently pushing for the termination of the Senate investigation—after only two hearings.

But many people cannot help but notice the similarities between the Jose Pidal and the Jose Velarde bank accounts. And many senators are using double standards in the two cases.

In both, there are huge bank deposits, in the hundreds of million of pesos, in the names of fictitious persons, both named after, of all people, St. Joseph, the Virgin Mary's consort. President Estrada and FG Mike are both accused of being the real bank depositors, charges that they have both denied. The only difference is that Erap is a public official and FG Mike claims he is not, although as First Gentleman, he is definitely a public figure, which is just a step away from a public official.

In both, the evidentiary documents against the accused were incomplete when the Senate hearings started. In fact, in the case of Erap, the discovery of the "second envelope," the non-opening of which triggered Edsa II, came long after the hearings had started. The evidence in the Jose Pidal case is also incomplete. But after only two hearings, some senators want the investigation aborted for lack of evidence. Yet the same senators pushed for the impeachment of Erap, and now the poor guy has been in detention for a long time for an alleged offense (opening a bank account under a fictitious name) for which the senators want the probe against FG Mike aborted. Where is justice there, where is the "equal protection" clause of the Constitution?

* * *

On the privacy issue, I don't think the Senate (nor the Supreme Court) has any choice but to rule that the case is "imbued with public interest" (like the coco levy funds) and the people involved have become public figures.

If they rule otherwise, can you imagine the repercussions of such a precedent? Every suspected grafter and suspected criminal will invoke the same right to privacy to refuse to answer questions. You have seen many scenes of hardened criminals parrying questions in court with such answers as "I don't remember" repeatedly. Now the answers will be "I invoke my right to privacy."

"The truth shall set you free" is a favorite expression, but the Arroyos seem not to believe that—if they're telling the truth. Are they? "By their actions, you shall know them," is another popular expression. Draw you own conclusion.

* * *

CORRECTION: In the Sept. 11 column, the first sentence of the second item (in bold letters) read: "Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said, "Filipinos *should move* to help perk up our sluggish economy."

It should have read *"should save more,"* not *"should move."*

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: An old man died and knocked on the gates of Heaven. At the gate, St. Peter asked him: "What have you done on earth to deserve Heaven?"

The old man replied: "I have been a loyal citizen of the Philippines for 85 years."

"Oh, in that case, you may enter," said St. Peter. "You have been in hell long enough."

Meteors falling

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'VE been asking people in the past days why F4, the stars of "Meteor Garden," are so popular.

The reason for it was the news I saw last week. Naia turned into a circus as soon as the group planed in. There was more security than greeted a visiting dignitary and a lot more enthusiasm. A group of kids had skipped elementary school to be on hand to welcome the guests. One girl would say later that she was a little disappointed not to have been able to shake the hands of her favorite stars—she had been swept aside when the crowd surged forward—but it was enough that she had shared the same ground with them, or within their proximity.

A fairly senior and impoverished citizen who was at the airport too said she made it a point to save whatever she could to buy F4 or Meteor Garden paraphernalia-posters, pictures, bric-a-brac. It gladdened her in her old age. Several airport officials themselves, men and women, lost their composure, and like the other fans, faces flushed, gushed breathlessly at the recollection the stars actually passed by them just a couple of feet away. And somebody told me kids from the more affluent schools not just skipped classes but rented rooms in the hotel adjoining the guests'. You can't get more cross-section, and idolatrous, than this.

These are levels of adulation I have not seen for some time. I did see it in my own time in the hysteria that greeted the Beatles wherever they went. I remember that there was a commotion too at the MIA when they arrived, and an even bigger one when they left. Though the latter was far less amusing: The group was chased out by a mob, apparently upon orders of Malacañang, presumably for snubbing a presidential invitation. A harrowing experience that prompted John Lennon to vow he would never return to this savage land, a vow he never had the chance to break. And an opinion he never had the chance to revise. But that is another story.

But that I should recall the Beatles in reference to F4 must suggest I am impressed by the latter's success in these parts. Certainly, none of the local "megastars"—Sharon Cuneta, Gary Valenciano, Martin Nievera—has met with the same levels of worship. They too must be wondering what happened, what they did wrong and what the Taiwanese group are doing right. I just read in the papers that fans caused a stampede at the Ultra, forcing the visitors to cancel an appearance in a local network next day lest they be crushed by fanatical embrace.

I confess I have not seen a "Meteor Garden" episode—my TV consists of news, some sports and DVD—but my 14-year-old tells me it's funny. He himself got rave reviews of it from his bus mates, which prodded him to watch it. He never got hooked on it, however. He left it after a couple of weeks to go back to his favorite Japanese anime, the ones with even weirder titles than "Meteor Garden"—"Initial D.," "Grander Musashi," "Amon Saga." And to his favorite online game, the locally made, and equally phenomenal, Ragnarok: I'll have to write about that, too, someday. But he says "Meteor Garden" is funny.

The reactions are divided. Some of my musician friends are furious at the impertinent poaching on territory. Particularly, as one told me last weekend, since F4 was apparently already on the wane (*"palaos na"*) in Taiwan. It doesn't help, he said, that they cannot hold a candle, music-wise, to any decent local group. But another musician friend was more philosophical. They must obviously be striking the right chord—pun fully intended, he said—with local audiences. And at least the group comes from another Asian country. We're too sucked into American Top 40 it was good to be invaded music-wise by an F4.

I myself think the phenomenon should wake us up to a not particularly pleasant prospect, about which I already warned in several previous columns. That is, that we could be losing our competitive edge in the export of musicians to Asia, which is one of our biggest and better-quality exports. The days when hotels in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok would put up signs that say, "Filipino band playing tonight" may be numbered.

The karaoke sounded the first tones of its death knell. The karaoke's invasion has been far and wide, penetrating the heartland of popular music itself, which is America. Certainly, its march into the local scene has been 2 fast 2 furious, if the ubiquity of the machine is anything to go by. Even NGOs have not been spared, their staff—like those of government offices—repairing to the nearest videoke bar after meetings to take out their frustrations on the microphone. That alone may explain the decline in the quality of NGO thinking over the past years, as shown specifically in their inability to distinguish War Bonds from Peace Bonds. But that is also another story.

The digital revolution turned the faint tones into a sonic boom. We probably still have the edge in ear but other Asian countries have the edge in technology. While we worry about piracy and use taxpayers' money to protect Hollywood (that's what Bong Revilla is doing with the Videogram Board), other Asian countries have been resolutely exploring the possibilities of MP3s and even higher levels of sound compression and finding new ways to market music. I did warn about that too before; we're looking at life through a rear-view mirror, trying to impose old structures on new realities.

Of course we can always say that meteors are fleeting things; they burn bright and die in the blink of an eye. But they can always say the same thing about us too, or our musicians.

I am (desperately) hoping we can find a way to reinvent ourselves. We've always had a good *oido*, maybe we can still play this one by ear. But it helps to read notes, too, or signs on the wall.

Some thoughts from Lee Kuan Yew

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

SINGAPORE's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Asia's longest serving elder statesman, turned 80 yesterday, and laid to rest speculations that he would retire soon.

In an interview with the Sunday Straits Times, Lee said he would serve in Cabinet as long as he could contribute, adding that "as long as I am fit and able, I will stand as a member of parliament."

How long would he serve as senior minister, a job Lee created for himself when he stepped down as prime minister 13 years ago, to ensure continuity of the policies that have made Singapore Southeast Asia's outstanding example of sustained economic success? "As long as I'm useful," he said. "How long will I be useful? That depends on my DNA, my doctors and the value of my data bank."

Speculations of his retirement were sparked by the announcement last month of Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong that he would soon hand over power to Lee's son, Lee Hsien Loong, deputy prime minister and finance minister. Lee Kuan Yew's decision to remain as senior minister would allow Goh to stay as PM until he retires or a second post of senior minister is created.

The imminent changes in Singapore's leadership illustrate the smooth power transition in that country, since Lee's retirement, in contrast to the tumultuous and quick turnover of power in some Southeast Asian countries—notably the Philippines and Indonesia. The Philippines has had three presidents since 1992, when President Ramos ended a six-year elected term. In 2001, Ramos' successor, Joseph Estrada, was toppled by "people power," and the successor government of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been rocked by a rebellion of the urban poor in 2001 and a failed military coup last July. In Indonesia, an emerging democracy, President Megawati Sukarnoputri took power three years ago after the long-time president, Suharto, stepped down.

Singapore has been described as a semi-authoritarian state, although with a functional parliamentary system that has ensured a long period of political stability and continuity of economic policy which is credited for transforming Singapore into a tiger economy with first world gross national product per capita, after Lee's People's Action Party won the first elections in 1959 and Singapore broke away from union with Malaysia in 1965.

In a region well known for its leaders' lengthy period of rule, Singapore's smooth transition of power draws a sharp contrast between its soft-authoritarianism—as the political environment that can promote economic growth and development—and the gridlock-prone adversarial democracies, like the Philippines, often rocked by economic policy disruptions and political crises.

Lee rejected suggestions that he was creating a political dynasty, paving the way for the prime ministerial succession of his son while remaining as senior minister. "The point is he's not taking over as my son, and I am not the one choosing or appointing him," Lee said in the Sunday Times interview. He's been DPM for 13 years, time enough for everyone to get the measure of him. If he's not proved himself, then he should not be PM. My concern is not whether he's the PM, but whether he's the best man for the job. I could have arranged to pass the baton directly to him instead of Goh Chok Tong. But then I'd have done Singaporeans a disservice, I would do him harm and blot my copy-book. The acid test is: Is he the best person to be PM?"

Why does he want to stand as MP for as long as he can? "If I'm no longer able to contribute as a minister, but I am still fit, I will stand as an MP. I want to have my say on important issues."

"If you are an MP, you have a right to be heard. That's why Churchill remained in Parliament long after he retired as PM: Ted Heath also remained as MP right to the end until he retired." In presidential systems, there are many presidents for life, but in parliamentary systems it is hard to find a PM for life.

Is there life in Singapore after Lee? Reminded that the American political scientist Samuel Huntington once said that Singapore will not last long after him, Lee said: "This question is non-sequitur. Huntington said that Singapore has a clean, efficient and effective government only because of Lee Kuan Yew, therefore, after I am gone that honest and resourceful Singapore will disappear."

Lee said: "We are proving him wrong. My colleagues and I have institutionalized honesty, integrity and meritocracy into the systems we have created. Each generation of leaders has the duty to recruit the people of integrity, ability and commitment as their successors. In 1990, I stepped down as PM. With every passing year, my involvement in immediate policy matters has decreased. I have concerned myself with the long-term consequences of policies, not the day-to-day running of government."

Asked about the view that he has stamped his imprimatur on Singapore too strongly, and Singapore is too regulated and clinical, Lee said "I have tried to build into the system certain basic principles which are of permanent value: Integrity in those entrusted with power, a strong sense of duty in the exercise of that power, no abuse of power in the interest of self or family; and the best person for the job, that is, meritocracy."

Asked whether he saw the press loosening up, Lee said. "The press in Singapore always has to remember that we are not a Western country. You start a slanging match, systematically denigrating the leaders, the leaders will take you on. If, day after day, they (the people) read their leaders denigrated, and these leaders put up with it, then they will lose respect for them."

Another 9/11 casualty

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AMONG THE PINOY "casualties" of 9/11 is Cesar Gabriel, who lost not just his common-law wife Benilda Domingo during the attack on the World Trade Center, but also his two young daughters, after an American judge gave custody of the girls to a maternal aunt.

A report in the The Filipino Reporter, a New York-based paper, says that last June 30 Judge John M. Czygier Jr. awarded guardianship of Yvonne, 9, and Lucky Angel (L.A.), 7, to their mother's sister, Emilita Domingo-Carr and her husband, Brendan Carr, both of Commack, Long Island. In his decision, Judge Czygier said awarding custody to the Carrs was in "the best interests" of the girls, noting that Cesar, 51, who works as a bus conductor in Laoag, "lacks a definite agenda" and "fails to grasp the enormity of the loss suffered by his daughters, and the special attention they might need in the future to cope with the loss."

Cesar is currently appealing the decision.

As told by the Filipino Reporter's Edmund Silvestre, Benilda, who was 38 when she died, met Cesar while heading home to Laoag City after working for two years as a domestic helper in Singapore. They fell in love and moved in together but decided not to marry "so as not to prolong the process of Benilda's immigration petition (filed) by her mother who is based in Hawaii."

Benilda and Cesar lived together for 15 years and had three children, the two girls and an older son, Daryl, now 16. When Benilda's US visa finally came through in September 2000, she brought her three children to the US, promising to return to marry Cesar and bring him over, too. Benilda left Yvonne and L.A. with her parents in Hawaii and took Daryl with her to New York.

* * *

FRIENDS and partisans of Cesar say that shortly after Benilda arrived in New York and found work as a cleaning woman at the World Trade Center, she called Emilita in Long Island and asked her if she could take in Yvonne and LA so Benilda could at least see her daughters on weekends. But Mrs. Carr refused, saying she had her hands full with her three sons, and so the girls remained in Hawaii.

But soon after the 9/11 disaster, the Carrs suddenly flew out to Hawaii and took the girls with them, saying they would stay only a few days in Long Island while the search for Benilda's remains was going on. (Why they didn't take in Daryl, who was alone in Queens, remains a mystery.) The Carrs, however, have yet to bring back the girls to Hawaii, although they found time to bring Yvonne and L.A. to Disneyworld and Universal Studios in Florida.

Meantime, Cesar scraped the money for his air fare and flew out to New York, staying with Daryl in the Queens apartment the boy shared with his mother, and waited to bury his wife. None of Benilda's remains have been found, however. He also called on the Carrs and asked that the girls be turned over to him. When they refused, Cesar sued for custody.

* * *

"THERE were a lot of errors and omissions at the trial and there is evidence which, if presented, might change the outcome of the decision," Cesar's Filipino-American lawyer, Carlos Garcia, claims.

Jojo Balagot, a friend of Cesar's who is familiar with the case, adds that Cesar was not represented properly by his previous lawyer, who took his case pro bono. The Carrs' lawyer, says Balagot, pictured Cesar as "irresponsible and cruel to his children." Cesar's lawyer at that time didn't even bother to refute the negative allegations of the Carrs and their witnesses.

"Under normal circumstances," states the Filipino Reporter story, quoting a custody expert, "it is very hard to remove the custody or guardianship (of a child) from the natural parent unless under extraordinary circumstances, that is, if the father is totally unqualified, for instance, a convicted rapist."

When reached by Silvestre, Emilita Carr said that the court has spoken and Cesar must accept the decision. "The case is over and he must go back to Laoag," she said. "I'm very happy with the decision. Yvonne and L.A. are also very, very happy. I am doing this for my sister and for the future of her children. I am 110 percent sure this is what my sister would want to happen," she added. The Carrs have three sons of their own, ages 12, 10 and 7.

* * *

CESAR, in the meantime, remains in shock, saying 9/11 took from him not only his wife, but his two daughters as well. "*Masakit, masakit ang naging desisyon* (Painful, the decision was really painful)," he said.

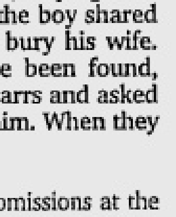
"Cesar sent a personal letter to President Arroyo (copies of which were furnished to Ilocos Norte Gov. Bongbong Marcos and ex-Ilocos Sur Gov. Chavit Singson) asking for financial or legal assistance," reports Silvestre. "He said he received no response. A Philippine Consulate official said the DFA has no funds for civil litigation involving overseas Filipinos, but assured they will continue to assist Cesar in his other requests."

Benilda's survivors—meaning her three children—stand to inherit a sizable sum, estimated to be more than $100,000, from their mother's compensation. The court has ruled that whatever amount the children are entitled to will be kept in trust by the public administrator of Suffolk County until the children reach legal age. The children have also reportedly received their share of donations that poured in from all over the US and the world for the survivors of the 9/11 victims.

But for Cesar, there is only the continuing legal struggle to win back custody of his daughters, the uncertainty of his status in the US, and the pain of the prospect of losing two more loved ones as a consequence of the death of his wife in 9/11.

Rizal's view on Tawalisi

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

ONE would think that by this time the beautiful warrior princess Urduja would be in the same historical dustbin as the Datu Kalantiaw of Aklan. But then invented tradition is sometimes more persistent than history. For example, Pangasinan Governor Victor Agbayani isn't bothered that he governs from "Urduja House." While we would all like to be truthful, one doesn't tell an ugly woman she is so to her face. So how does a historian gently debunk cherished belief to reconcile history and local pride?

Reading the text about Tawalisi and Urduja as quoted in last Friday's column, I couldn't suspend disbelief to enjoy the story of a Turkish-speaking Pangasinan princess who would only marry a man strong enough to beat her in hand to hand combat. Then there was Urduja's wish to invade India with her band of Amazons, or the gifts she lavished on Ibn Batuta that included two-elephant loads of rice. Domesticated elephants were in use in Mindanao long ago, but elephants in Pangasinan? Maybe in the time of the dinosaurs.

Urduja crept into textbooks and the list of "Great Filipinos" due to a 1916 pamphlet, "The Particulars of the Philippines Pre-Spanish Past," authored by the pioneering UP historian Austin Craig. Because of his stature, nobody questioned how Tawalisi and Urduja were traced to Pangasinan. From there the story was embellished into its present form. Craig's source for this assertion was no other than Jose Rizal. But before we go into that, we must know a bit more about Ibn Batuta and I am thankful for the data e-mailed by Ed Maranan of the Philippine Embassy, London.

No one knows the exact date of Ibn Batuta's birth. But we know it was sometime before the completion of his travelogue in 1357. His birthplace was Morocco. Like Marco Polo did, he provided information for Western people curious about the other side of the world.

Ibn Batuta's travels of three decades started on a pilgrimage to Mecca, from where he proceeded to China, Russia, Spain, and even Timbuctu, a place I thought was as imaginary as Shangrila, only to be told it is the present-day Mali.

The exact location of Tawalisi has been the subject of learned speculation, and among the candidates are: Cambodia, Borneo, Sulu and Pangasinan. Rizal disagreed with the scholar Henry Yule who said:

"Indeed, considering that Killa-Karai is the real name of a port in South India, and that Urduja is a name which our author in a former part of his travels has assigned to one of the Queens of Mahomed Uzbek Khan on the Volga, and has explained to mean in Turkish 'Born in the camp,' whilst the Lady of Tawalisi herself is made to speak not only to the traveler but to her own servants a mixture of Turkish and Persian, a faint suspicion rises that Tawalisi is really to be looked for in that part of the atlas which contains the Marine Surveys of the late Captain Gulliver."

In a letter to A.B. Meyer of the Dresden Museum, Rizal wrote:

"I cannot accept Yule's suggested suspicion that Tawalisi may be found only in Gulliver's Geography. While I have doubts regarding the accuracy of Ibn Batuta's details, still I believe in the voyage to Tawalisi. There are details which only the reality of the statements could have furnished, details which could not have been invented—like the change in the government of Kailucary, previously ruled by the son of the King, etc. Besides, what possible interest could Ibn Batuta have had in falsifying? In this travel-account, he introduces nothing in favor of his religion or to himself, nor does he mention new marvels or entertaining adventures. The traveler had visited so many and such beautiful countries much more interesting than Tawalisi. He would not go out of his way to discredit them in order to invent an insignificant incident. That after his return he tried to embellish his travels with some exaggerated and fanciful details is possible. But imagination, love of the marvelous or a certain confusion produced by the multitude of things seen can equally well have been the cause.

"The principal data in which I think this ought to be sought are the distances, which do not vary with time and I give preference to these over details regarding names and customs. Travel from Kakula, in Mul-Java, to Tawalisi usually took 74 to 84 days. Ibn-Batuta spent 71 days, 34 going under sail and 37 days rowing. From Tawalisi to Canton was 15 days with a favorable wind. These details argue for Ibn Batuta's veracity since travelers usually make the lands they invent remote.

"With these two data, and knowing the average attainment of Ibn Batuta's ship was from eight to ten geographical leagues (15 of these to the degree)—from the Maldives to Bengal, 43 days, from Bengal to Barahuagan 15, we may trace two arcs, one from Canton with a radius of 180 geographical leagues—on the supposition that with favoring winds the day's sail might be 12 leagues, and the other arc from Kakula (between Java and Sumatra) of 430 leagues 7 radius—calculating that by oars the speed would only be half. The intersection of these arcs, we should find, would be exactly in the neighborhood of the northern part of the Philippines."

Just because he is Rizal doesn't mean he is infallible. Tawalisi cannot be placed in Pangasinan, and Urduja? Well that is another story.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Great privilege, great responsibility

COMMENTARY

Reynaldo O. Arcilla

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is going to New York later this month to press for the Philippine candidature to one of the non-permanent seats of the United Nations Security Council. The election of the non-permanent members to a two-year term in the 15-member body will be held next month.

As a Filipino, I hope she succeeds.

I also hope she realizes that it is not the US-led war against terrorism that may work against our candidature. There is universal agreement on that war. Rather, it is our unqualified support for the US-led invasion of Iraq, sans Security Council authority, which the majority of the UN members, including UN Secretary General Kofi Annan himself, had denounced.

There are less than 50 members of the so-called Coalition of the Willing on whom we can count for almost certain support for our candidature. With the possible 52 votes of the Asian Group which has endorsed our candidature, we would still fall short of the required two-thirds vote of 128 in the 191-member UN General Assembly. I say "possible" 52 votes of the Asian Group because some of its members (almost half are Islamic countries) have expressed serious reservations about our probable stand on many issues before the Council. If true, said members would likely desert us in case we do not get the required two-thirds majority on the first ballot. If that happens, our candidature may be doomed. Needless to say, that would be a tragic blow to our already sagging international image and stature.

Membership in the Security Council is a rare privilege. But it entails great responsibility. The Council is primarily tasked with the maintenance of international peace and security. As such, its actions are always under close scrutiny by the world at large. The position of individual Council members is also held under a magnifying glass and accordingly judged by the international community.

The last time we served in the Security Council was 23 years ago (1980-1981). I had the privilege of representing the country in that body as alternate representative. It was no picnic.

As a representative of the Asian Group (there is one other at any given time), we would naturally be expected, if elected, to express and promote the Group's interest in the Council. With the return of our "special relations" with the United States, however, we will surely find ourselves in a very awkward situation most of the time, as we did in 1980-1981. Most of the Asian Group members, then and now, have more "independent" and "principled" stance than ours on issues tackled by the Council, most notably the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and other questions involving the Middle East. And, lest we forget, the Council will continue to be confronted with the present Iraq situation for years to come.

Moreover, then as now, there is in the Non-Aligned Caucus that is supposed to look after and promote the Non-Aligned Movement's (NAM) position on vital issues before the body. We were part of that Caucus in 1980-81, although we were a mere Observer in NAM at the time. But because of our known pro-US stance on issues before the Council, the Caucus members never really took our views seriously. Now that we are a full-fledged member of the NAM, life for us in the Council would be even more difficult, to say the least.

As I said, membership in the Security Council is a privilege. However, whether or not it will serve our national interest, given our present pro-American identity, is another question. In my view, it will; provided we get just returns, emphasis on "just," for being supportive of the United States.

Already, foreign diplomats have remarked: "The Americans are already waiting for you in the Security Council." I am not sure what they mean exactly. My guess is they are convinced that once elected, we will simply toe the American line. That shows our lack of credibility.

To be credible is to be a good ally. I wish the Americans (and our leaders) would understand that and not pressure us into taking their side all the time.

But pressure us they will. And we will succumb. However, that's not the sad part. The sad part is we will wind up as a nation with lost pride and dignity, holding an empty bag, unless....

Reynaldo O. Arcilla, is a former Philippine ambassador.

THEY SAID

Commitment

"We have to make a firm commitment to do the best we can to preserve and protect our democracy."
—Former President Corazon Aquino during the Pagtitipon para sa Pagtatanggol ng Demokrasya

Dual role

"I see my dual role as a means of leading a quick consolidation process…the strengthening of the chain of command, the rationalization of resources and the sharpening of the will to fight."
—President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on her six-month stay as concurrent defense secretary

Without exception

"I will say without exception that there is nothing wrong with the Philippine Military Academy."
—Vice Admiral Ernesto de Leon, flag officer in command of the Philippine Navy during recognition rites of the PMA Maragtas Class of 2007

A greater tragedy

"I bet they are very happy now because they finally succeeded in killing him."
—Louise Pala, wife of slain broadcaster Juan "Jun" Pala, on the still unidentified killers

Disclosure

"Senator (Panfilo) Lacson does not disclose everything, even to his lawyer."
—Sigfrid Fortun, Senator Lacson's lawyer

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Perception of sincerity and absence of guile

LETTERS

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is calling for national unity and has given her support for a summit among political parties to work out a cessation of bickering in these critical times. If it is public support that the President is seeking, her main concern will be the public's perception of sincerity and the absence of guile in her administration. Perception of rectitude is the absolute demand for public support to be given. As one great political thinker put it, in public service it is not enough to be honest. One must also be perceived to be honest.

It is not enough, for instance, that Sen. Panfilo Lacson cannot prove his charges against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo in court. With GMA's assistance, Mr. Arroyo must demonstrate he is without guilt by harnessing the administration's resources and access to official records. The President cannot divorce herself from malfeasance charges leveled against her husband. Whatever the motives and means Senator Lacson has employed in his charges are immaterial. The President cannot ignore these with a parody of Elizabeth I's declaration that she is "wed to the nation" and from there hope to lead her people to great heights of achievement and conquest.

In the case of GMA, she is very much married to Mike Arroyo and she will be leading the nation to perdition if she does not clear the air of the stench that engulfs us. She cannot leave this mess unclarified and hope it will be blown away by her brother-in-law's smug claim to a "right of privacy" in the Senate's "zarzuela" where the participants are driven more by party alliances than the desire for truth. If the political implications do not deter GMA, there is the excruciating pain of the alleged philandering of her husband. This can provoke a tempest worse than a political upheaval.

With regard to the call for a summit of all major political parties, what do they hope to achieve? An understanding that they will not expose the corruption they detect in one another? A steal and let steal policy? The areas of cooperation among political groups that are needed to move the country forward are clear and obvious. No summits are needed to discover these, only a genuine desire to serve the country—which unfortunately cannot be found in any of our leading political figures, including GMA who tolerates erring allies and henchmen to seek shelter under her presidential skirt. The common challenge of those in powers to "Take me to the courts" is no longer valid proof of innocence knowing the disrepute our courts have fallen into.

—E. P. DAKANAY JR.,
43 Baltazar St., Philamlife Village,
Pamplona, Las Piñas City

How did Lacson get Pidal documents?

I BELIEVE that the documents that Sen. Panfilo Lacson presented to the Senate on the Jose Pidal case, granting that these are genuine copies and not manufactured, could not have been obtained through lawful means. Why? Simply because these documents are supposed to be private and confidential, and banks normally keep such documents in secured fire-proof vaults. Therefore, there is no way they could have fallen into Mr. Lacson's hand had they not been stolen.

Are Filipinos so clueless that none of them seem to know about this? I read at least five Philippine newspapers every day and monitor Philippine news most of my waking hours each day, and yet I cannot remember anyone, including people from the media, and worse, lawyers of "Jose Pidal" and the banks involved, questioning how the "good" senator acquired the Jose Pidal documents.

It scares the daylight out of me to think that we have a senator who could produce "evidence" through extra-legal means (no subpoena, no court order, no search warrant) and senators who would readily accept this "evidence" as gospel truth without batting an eyelash as to how such "evidence" were obtained. I am scared, really scared. Are you not?

—HENRY NILLS,
henry.nills@eudoramail.com

No 'babying' of smokers in Makati

WE write in reaction to the letter of Menj Mendiola of Los Angeles, California, published on Sept. 1, 2003.

We fully agree with the writer's comments about the detrimental effects of smoking on the health of both smokers and the so-called "passive" or "secondhand smokers."

And he should be glad to know that in Makati, we most certainly do not "baby" smokers. We resolutely enforce the city's local anti-smoking ordinance despite some attempts by critics to derail or discourage our efforts. I wish to point out to your letter-sender, however, that our ordinance imposes stringent standards for the approval of a designated smoking area in any establishment to ensure that cigarette smoke does not permeate through non-smoking areas and pose serious health risks to non-smokers.

Establishments not covered by the absolute smoking ban, and with an area of at least 100 square meters will have to comply with the following architectural and engineering requirements for a smoking area: (1) physical partitions that are fixed, solidly built double-walled floor-to-ceiling or floor-to-floor partitions made of materials with at least one-hour fire-resistive rating (note: native materials like bamboo, nipa, logs or lumber will not be allowed for partitions); and (2) effective and strong ventilation systems that conform to the provisions of the National Building Code and the Philippine Society of Mechanical Engineering Code.

In addition to the said requirements, the ordinance also prescribes the maximum size of a designated smoking area for each type of establishment so that the non-smoking area is always bigger than the smoking area.

The provision for a designated smoking area in both our local ordinance and the national law is, I believe, a tacit acknowledgement of the "freedom of choice" of smokers. While they do have the right to indulge in this habit, they also have a social and moral obligation to avoid unduly exposing other people, especially non-smokers, by smoking only in authorized designated smoking areas while in enclosed public places.

I am confident that in time, critics of the ordinance and the national law will get over their initial aversion to the smoking restrictions and realize that the law's long-term objectives will benefit our people and leave a legacy of healthful living for many generations to come.

—JEJOMAR C. BINAY,
mayor, Makati City

A replicable program for the urban poor

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo, on her visit to Parola may have missed the main story: 800-plus families have been planning a community upgrading program for five months with the cooperation of the Asian Development Bank, HUDCC Chair Mike Defensor and two NGOs—the Urban Poor Associates and Foundation for the Development of the Uban Poor.

In an area that is famous for organization rivalry and jealousy, the 800 families from different people's organization have agreed on a common plan of action. The plan stresses security of land tenure and improved light, water, drainage, sanitation, roads and playgrounds. Improvements in housing will come in a second phase.

The plan can be replicated and improve the lives, not only of Parola's 10,000 poor families but many of the 800,000 poor families all over Metro Manila.

The people need the President's help to get as much land as possible by proclamation and negotiation so the "reblocking" can work. Also they need her to support the plan and to urge its swept completion. Some of the people receiving awards are from the 800 families who live between Gates 10-14 on the Tondo side. If the President would talk to them when they receive their awards, she will know of the work they've done and of their hopes.

—TEODORO AÑANA, ALICIA GENTOLIA-MURPHY, ROSELLE PACIFICO,
Urban Poor Associates, 25-Mabuhay St.,
Bgy. Central, Quezon City

Give GSIS members their due

SINCE April 28, 2003, the Government Service Insurance System, under the administration of GSIS president Winston Garcia, has suspended the salary and policy loan benefits for its members as a consequence of which thousands of GSIS members in financial difficulty have been affected. If my memory serves me right, it is the first time that this has happened to the GSIS.

Is it right to presume that all GSIS branches, including GSIS Iligan, have "no go-signal yet from the GSIS central office" to resume loan benefits, except for the Department of Education employees who appreciatively took courage to air their grievances?

Initially, GSIS members were informed that loan transactions at the GSIS would be suspended starting April 28, 2003 to give way to the upgrading of its programs so it could provide its members with more efficient and effective service. The upgrading is certainly taking unreasonably too long for the GSIS, equipped as it is with computers. The reason for the suspension of the loan benefits becomes more doubtful considering that DepEd employees are now granted policy loan benefits.

With no credible explanation as to why the loan benefits cannot resume, GSIS members are now kept speculating as to what had happened to their money—monthly contributions. Is the GSIS short of funds? Has there been mismanagement of GSIS funds? Why are the loan benefits until now suspended?

Under the present circumstances, is there a need for GSIS members, who are the contributors of GSIS funds, to organize themselves for purposes of demanding from the GSIS management what is due them. The GSIS members are the very reason for the existence of the GSIS. The GSIS is nothing without its members.

—JAMALODEN A. BASAR,
legal services division,
Mindanao State University,
Marawi City

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

When will the media body count stop?

By Ansbert Joaquin
Olongapo City

SIXTEEN years have passed since community journalist Dionisio "Dennis" Joaquin was killed but justice still eludes his family. The Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility has included Joaquin in its list of 42 journalists slain while performing their duties since 1986.

As another journalist was felled by an assassin's bullet in Davao City recently, Joaquin's brother Ansbert, an INQUIRER *correspondent in Olongapo City, remembers Dennis and the family's struggle to give him justice.*

HE WAS a man of few words and yet he had plenty of stories to tell. What he could not communicate in words, he expressed in deeds. What he could not express orally, he articulated in writing.

That's how people pictured my brother, Dionisio "Dennis" Joaquin, associate publisher and business manager of the short-lived Olongapo-Zambales News Forum, who was murdered by a lone gunman 16 years ago. He was one of the 42 Filipino journalists killed in the line of duty since 1986.

It was in 1986 when my brother, then 24, joined a strike at the former Subic Naval Base. For taking part in the protest, he, together with 41 others who had since then been collectively known as the "Subic 42," was fired from his job.

Shortly after being booted out of work, he spent his separation pay to publish and edit a local news magazine, and immediately and uncompromisingly took the cudgels for the poor and harassed workers.

Working on his first ever issue, he roamed the city's former red light districts on Magsaysay Avenue and in Barrio Barretto, from midnight till the wee hours of the morning, and interviewed street children who were then left to begging, selling sampaguita leis, shining shoes for American servicemen, and, worse, prostitution.

He then helped organize another workers' strike, this time involving female restaurant workers at the Casa Blanca Restaurant in Barrio Barretto.

A foreign-owned restaurant catering to US Navy personnel, Casa Blanca was not the ordinary restaurant that one would normally imagine.

tiCapital
Uphold PRESS
KILL-N! WON'T STOP
UPHOLD PRESS FREEDOK

JOURNALISTS based in Cagayan de Oro City gather during a rally last week to denounce the killing of Davao broadcaster Juan Pala Jr. and 48 other media practitioners since 1986. The statistic comes from NUJP and CMFR.
GRACE CANTAL-ALBASIN/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

JOAQUIN'S family grieve over his body. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Female boxing

The restaurant was then known for featuring women boxing where female restaurant workers—from waitresses to cashiers, clad in skimpy outfits—were pitted against each other in boxing bouts before the ogling eyes of its American customers.

Those who would not put up a good fight would either be fined or terminated from work.

It could have been a very interesting story for the second issue of the Olongapo-Zambales News Forum. But my brother did not live to write the story.

At dawn of April 12, 1987, he was killed by a lone gunman while sleeping at the picket line in the Casa Blanca Restaurant.

Adding pain to the family's injury, and for reasons known only to himself, a Catholic priest in the city prejudged him as a communist and refused to offer Mass during his wake.

The gunman, Nicomedes Fabro, surrendered to the police and pointed to Bill Hoge, owner of the Casa Blanca Restaurant, as the one who hired him for P20,000 to kill Dennis.

During the court trial, Fabro said he spilled the beans on Hoge after the latter paid him only half the agreed amount.

Interestingly, the police investigator assigned to the case identified Fabro as a tricycle driver who used to run errands for the then chief of the Criminal Investigation Service in the city.

On at least two occasions, Fabro arrived at the justice hall for court hearings on my brother's murder case riding alone in a tricycle, when he was supposed to have been under police custody as a suspect in a non-bailable case.

In 1989, Fabro, who was supposed to be in the National Bilibid in Muntinlupa, after having been sentenced to life for the murder of my brother, was reported in the papers to have been involved in yet another killing, this time involving an American serviceman, in Barangay East Tapinac, also in Olongapo.

In 1998, Fabro was seen still staying inside the city jail in Barrio Barretto. Asked why he was still there, he said he was attending a court hearing on yet another murder case.

Scot-free

Sixteen years after the murder, the suspected mastermind, Bill Hoge, has remained scot-free after he eluded arrest and fled to the United States before he could be arraigned.

About five years ago, this same Bill Hoge had the temerity to petition the courts to dismiss the case against him so he could return to the Philippines. City Prosecutor Prudencio Jalandoni turned him down.

To improve the lot of the impoverished Filipinos, my brother wrote his mind out and, together with 41 other journalists who we may now call the "Philippines 42," was banished from this Earth for doing so.

If it is any consolation to their families, especially that of my brother's, the practice of women boxing in Barrio Barretto catering to American servicemen had stopped since his death.

However, restaurants, this time catering primarily to Taiwanese businessmen, now feature nude shows in the town of Subic, just 5 km northward to Zambales from where my brother was felled by an assassin.

The female dancers' condition is revolting to say the least and is a very interesting story for today's courageous writers to write about, as the local media and members of the local chapter of the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines have already done.

But when will we stop the body count?

Wayawaya: Cordillera artists call for freedom

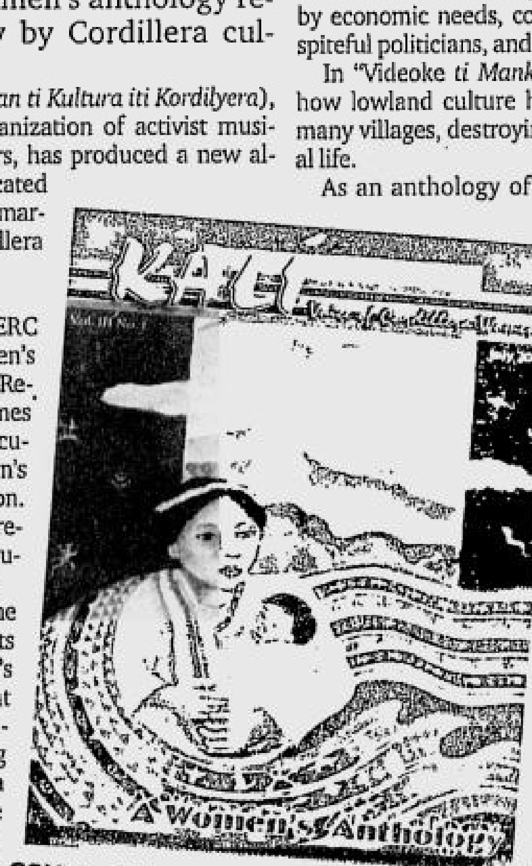
By Delfin Tolentino Jr.
Contributor

"*ENTAYO ibandera/ Kultura ti wayawaya*! (Let us wave the flag/ Of the culture of freedom!)." This is the call that echoes in a CD and women's anthology released recently by Cordillera cultural workers.

The DKK (*Dap-ayan ti Kultura iti Kordilyera*), a Baguio-based organization of activist musicians and performers, has produced a new album of songs dedicated to the heroes and martyrs of the Cordillera self-determination movement.

From the CWERC (Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center) comes an anthology documenting the women's cause in the region. Together, they represent a single document of oppression.

Over the years, the DKK has firmed up its position as Baguio's principal exponent of the music of conscientization. Using the *salidummay*, a musical form native to the central Cordillera, the DKK has struck a gold mine in traditional music. In their songs, the melodies hark back to the past, but the lyrics speak of the present.



COVER of "Kali, Voice of Cordillera Women."

In "*Ay Ay Salidummay*," their fifth album, the DKK calls on the people to fight the big mining operations that continue to devastate many villages. The triumphant struggle against the government's Chico dam project in the '80s, and the enduring movement for justice in the Cordillera, are memorialized.

As the songs assert, the uncertainty of life in the Cordillera is largely the work of the outsider. In "Anoy" (Alas), the DKK speaks of how the government subverts indigenous institutions like the peace pact between warring villages to create internal discord.

The Cordillera is paradise lost. This is the image that recurs in the songs. It also makes up the underlying premise of "Kali," the CWERC anthology.

The regional landscape, as recreated in many works, consists of mountain fastnesses mangled by illegal logging, hamlets ravaged by toxic waste from the mines, households pried apart by economic needs, communities neglected by spiteful politicians, and stolen ancestral land.

In "Videoke *ti Mankayan*," the poet talks of how lowland culture has insinuated itself into many villages, destroying the fabric of traditional life.

As an anthology of women's works, "Kali" ties up these problems with the plight of Cordillera women who are oppressed by feudal structures and abused by the forces of globalization. These are the women molested by policemen or forced to slave themselves as "semi-workers in a stunted economy."

Although the bulk of the collection consists of literary works, the anthology also includes examples of poster art and paintings by women artists. There are also photographs of face paintings, a novel mode of protest.

In the song "*Kultura ti Wayawaya*" (Culture of Freedom), a call is issued enjoining Cordillera cultural workers to use various modes of expression-folk forms as well as new media. It pays to listen to this call. There is a disturbing tediousness in many of the works in both the CD and anthology, largely because the writers have merely resorted to trite images and worn-out expressions.

The cause of women and indigenous peoples in the Cordillera will be served well if cultural workers recognized that there are more fertile fields beyond the banal metaphor of the "lost Eden."

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Fund scam hounds Sarangani execs

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DILI
CORRUPTION
IKONDINA ANG MGA KAWATAN SA KAPITOLYO

ABOUT 10,000 people rally in front of the Sarangani provincial capitol in Alabel town to dramatize their protest against alleged widespread corruption in the province.

AQUILES ZONIO

THEY ARE considered the high and mighty in Sarangani. They call the shots when it comes to the political destiny of the province.

Rural folk admire and, to some extent, even worship the governor and other key provincial officials. Nothing but the best is offered whenever they tour their turf.

This holds true particularly in an economically and politically backward province like Sarangani.

Sarangani was carved out of South Cotabato on March 16, 1992, by virtue of Republic Act No. 7228 authored by then Rep. James Lee Chiongbian.

But barely 11 years after its inception, the province now seems to be going to the dogs.

For almost three months now, controversy over the allegedly anomalous disbursement of public funds has hounded the province. The officials allegedly involved appear hell-bent on using all means to keep themselves off the hook.

What looked like a low-level, petty corruption at the start is turning out to be a widespread and syndicated pillage of taxpayers' money.

The perpetrators employed both accounting and bureaucratic legerdemain to cover their tracks. But the immensity of the scam stinks to high heavens.

Accidental

The discovery of a multimillion-peso scam in the provincial capitol was accidental.

Domingo Blatang, B'laan tribal chieftain in Barangay Datal Bukay in Glan town, went to the provincial capitol after receiving a notice of liquidation from the Provincial Accountant's office asking him to liquidate the P350,000 released to the Datal Bukay Minorities Development Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

An irked Blatang blabbed while inside one of the eateries, threatening to file charges against those who forged his signature to facilitate the release of the money.

Unknown to him, Elmer Catulpos, a newscaster/reporter of RMN Radyo Agong based in General Santos City, was listening. Immediately, Catulpos took out his cassette recorder and asked Blatang to speak out.

The next day, the issue became a popular topic, not only over the radio but also in almost every nook and cranny of the province and in General Santos.

Whistleblowers

Two provincial employees who were earlier tagged as masterminds made a sudden turnaround and decided to blow the lid off the irregularity.

They pointed at high-ranking officials as the perpetrators.

In an interview, Gov. Miguel Escobar maintained his innocence, even citing a biblical passage: "Don't judge, so you won't be judged."

"Let's wait for the investigation. Don't prejudge things based on oral accounts. Hurling accusations is easy but proving what you said is another thing," Escobar said.

Mary Ann Gadian, computer operator III under the Office of the Vice Governor, depicted a vivid portrait of how government funds were squandered in the province.

A government employee for 10 years, Gadian, who claimed her conscience compelled her to spill the beans, was among the five employees who used to facilitate the release of funds for several ghost cooperatives and nongovernment organizations (NGOs).

She came out in the open after finding out that the key officials involved in the scandal were allegedly plotting to kill her.

Another whistleblower was a certain Sherryl Desiree Jane Tangan, an employee in the vice governor's office and Gadian's co-accused in a graft case now pending with the Ombudsman.

Tangan, whose participation includes encashing checks, corroborated Gadian's disclosure.

The three other employees were used as scapegoats and are now facing graft charges before the Ombudsman. They are Elena Africa, Jongjong Alquiza and Amelia Carmela Constantino-Zoleta, daughter and chief of staff of Vice Gov. Felipe Constantino.

Web of corruption

On July 19, Gadian decided to expose the fund scandal. She executed a complaint-affidavit against key officials of the province after learning that she was charged with graft before the Ombudsman. Her affidavit, dated Aug. 1, 2003, was notarized in Pasay City by a certain Marlita I. Vallestero.

Gadian claimed that whenever the provincial officials were in need of cash for their personal needs or trips, they usually called her up to cook up a project.

She would concoct names for nonexistent cooperatives and assign false identities for dummy persons upon orders from her superiors.

Most often her task was to prepare supporting documents like letter requests and project proposals to justify the release of the funds, as well as disbursement vouchers.

Most, if not all, of the documents, including the eventual releases of funds, were "fraudulent, anomalous and irregular."

To expedite the encashment of the checks, Gadian said they would grab anybody on the street and bring him or her to the capitol for the issuance of identification.

The dummy was brought to the bank. If a bank official doubted the authenticity of the ID card, he or she would be told to call up the provincial officials for confirmation.

One of the dummies was a beautician named "Emay," who serves as manicurist of board member Margie Rudes, daughter of board member Juanito Purisima and ex-officio member of the provincial board representing the Municipal Councilors' League of the province.

In cases where the beneficiaries were officials of legitimate and existing cooperatives or NGOs, the crooks would give a token amount for allowing their names to be used.

In some instances, preparation of supporting documents and disbursement vouchers, including encashment of checks to the banks, took only about three hours.

Can a lowly employee carry out this modus operandi without the knowledge of provincial officials?

From July 1 to July 31, the Commission on Audit in Sarangani led by state auditor Helen Cailing conducted a special audit as requested by the Office of the Ombudsman-Mindanao following a letter-complaint from a concerned citizen.

The audit team pored over the disbursement vouchers and conducted inspection and actual interview with residents.

The provincial officials and other employees involved were directed to submit their comments or justification to the COA.

Despite the issuance of Audit Observation Memo No. 2003-08 dated June 26 by the COA, the governor, vice governor, board members and provincial administrator did not submit their comments.

Only the provincial treasurer and accountant complied, prompting the COA to call for another conference on July 21. Nothing happened, thus the probe proceeded.

The investigation had just started when members of the COA audit team received death threats and were asked to call off the inquiry.

Terrified, the team decided to end its probe. They collated all their data and submitted them to the COA regional office for action.

COA findings

The COA found the provincial government released last year a total of P50,699,382.99 as financial assistance and grants to various cooperatives and people's organizations (POs).

Of the total amount, P29,256,981.31 was classified as assistance, while P21,692,401.68 was given as grants and donations to various cooperatives, NGOs and POs.

The COA report showed that P16,136,613.00 of the total amount released went to 81 ghost co-ops, NGOs and POs.

Only P3,998,094.50 of the more than P50 million in disbursed funds had been liquidated.

"Verification of records and confirmation of financial assistance granted to NGOs, POs and LGUs beneficiaries revealed that there were various irregularities and deficiencies committed by the concerned provincial officials and employees in the releases and liquidations of grants and aids ...," the audit team said.

These were in violation not only of COA and budget regulations but also of the Revised Penal Code.

Among the violations were falsification of supporting documents for disbursement vouchers; most of the cooperatives and organizations granted with grants or assistance were either fictitious, no longer operating or inactive; no official receipts were issued to the beneficiaries; many co-op officials and members were fictitious if not unknown to the locality; signatures appearing in the documents were mostly forged; and disbursement vouchers were processed, pre-audited and approved even without the necessary documents.

The COA pointed out that there was no monitoring and inspection report by the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist on livelihood projects; no official receipt was issued to prove that the amount went to the beneficiaries; no liquidation report submitted on the funds spent; most of the project proposals and letter-requests had no date and approval and no monitoring and inspection report made by the engineering office on infrastructure projects.

These acts, the COA report said, were tantamount to malversation of public funds through falsification of public documents.

Under Article 217 in relation to Article 171 of the Revised Penal Code, the penalty of prison and a fine not to exceed P5,000 shall be imposed upon any public officer, employee, or notary who, taking advantage of his official position, shall falsify a document.

The COA audit team also found that financial assistance was also given to cooperatives whose officials and members were either capitol employees or relatives of provincial officials.

It cited the Binuyugan Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Maitum town and the Hakbang Development Cooperative in Glan, which received about P1.4 million and P1 million, respectively, in assistance.

Binuyugan co-op members who were government employees were Edwin Cabanting, Legislative Staff Officer II at the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP); Eddie Bagcatin, Provincial Security Guard II; Noel Cabalona, Driver I at the SP; Jonathan Duhaylungsod, program director of the provincial agriculturist's office; Nelson Dela Cuadra, casual employee and Rebecca Escobar, sister-in-law of the governor.

Members of the Hakbang co-op in Glan identified as government officials and employees were board member Eugene Alzate; Edgar Galvez, legislative staff officer II at the SP; Joseph Dijan, clerk at SP; Jimmy Langomez, driver I at the SP and Dominic Alzate, legislative staff assistant at SP.

Calamity period

The Provincial Agriculturist's Office launched a P4-million Sagiptanim project last year aimed at cushioning the adverse impact of calamity in agriculture.

In its 2002 Annual Audit Report (AAR), the COA indicated the deficiencies and irregularities in the implementation of the project, particularly the procurement of 4,125 sacks of rice from Johnson Hardware in General Santos.

The implementing agency pledged to come up with new guidelines and procurement system to minimize negotiated purchases.

But when the COA reviewed the recent purchase documents involving 500 bags of rice, it was observed that the "procurement system was even getting worse than before ..."

The award of contract and purchase orders to Johnson Hardware was made without public bidding. Inspection of delivery showed a shortage of sacks of rice.

On May 26, the province signed up Johnson Hardware as exclusive supplier of rice from April 3, 2003 to April 3, 2004, the period declared calamity period by the province.

The COA further discovered that 1,875 sacks of rice were distributed not to calamity-stricken farmers but to municipal and barangay officials on June 30, 2002, a week before the barangay elections.

Who got how much?

The COA could have gathered more damning evidence and came up with more stunning figures had it decided to go on with the investigation.

Gadian claimed that the audit by the COA merely scratched the surface of the irregularity. The investigation lasted for only about two months.

Gadian claimed that as much as P61 million in public funds may have been lost due to the anomaly.

She admitted that she alone had facilitated the release of close to P15 million since 2002 up to the time the fund scandal broke out.

Officials blamed by Gadian and even by the COA for approving the disbursements of public funds were Escobar, Vice Gov. Felipe Constantino, Provincial Treasurer Ceasar Cagang and Provincial Accountant Maria Camanay.

Constantino allegedly received P740,000, while his daughter Zoleta got (P2.273 million) and his son, Malungon Vice Mayor Reynaldo Constantino, had P300,000.

The board members who reportedly benefited from the scam were Hernando L. Sibugan (P90,000); Redempto Y. Abiso (P20,000); Teodorico F. Diaz (P150,000); Juanito H. Purisima (P400,000); Pyang L. Singcoy (P20,000); Marlind L. Marcelo (P95,000); Cornelio C. Martinez (P20,000); Eugene L. Alzate (P300,000); Jesus H. Desidilla (P45,000); Lilibeth L. Canillo P320,000) and Margie P. Rudes (P870,000).

Others were provincial administrator Perla Maglinte (P330,000); provincial accountant Maria D. Camanay (P90,000); provincial treasurer Ceasar Cagang (P20,000) and Alexis Jude Dela Cruz (P20,000).

Gadian could not give an exact figure how much each of the key officials involved in the anomaly had pocketed. But, she said, this will come out later after a thorough investigation.

Escobar's name was not included in Gadian's list of provincial officials who pocketed the money released to fake cooperatives and POs.

But, she said, it is hardly believable that the multimillion-peso scam took place without the knowledge of the chief executive.

Lavish wedding

Some of the funds were allegedly used last year during the trip of provincial members and other capitol employees to attend the wedding of Alzate in Cebu.

Each department head who attended the wedding reportedly received a P25,000 allowance.

The wedding was timed during the "Lakbay-Aral" of the provincial board members to justify the release of the budget and to disguise the real intention of the trip.

Gadian said all provincial board members and the vice governor, except the representative, of the Sangguniang Kabataan, were involved in the scam.

When Gadian felt that he was being isolated, she went to dxES Radyo Bombo on July 19 where she revealed everything during an interview.

She claimed many board members begged, some of them shed tears asking her to stay silent.

She told Vic Dante, station manager of Bombo Radyo and host of the daily public affairs program "Bombohanay Bigtime," that she started compiling documents when the fund anomaly leaked to the media in June.

Dante told the INQUIRER that he himself had been receiving death threats through text messages for consistently tackling the issue in his program. Despite this, the feisty commentator is undisturbed, saying "It's worth dying defending a legitimate cause."

Efforts are now being reportedly made to place Gadian and Tangan under the justice department's witness protection program.

NBI probe

In an interview, Sarangani Rep. Erwin Chiongbian disclosed that he had already sent a letter-request to the National Bureau of Investigation in Manila asking for the immediate investigation of the reported anomaly.

The investigation had not yet started.

On Aug. 19, leaders from Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, civil society, transport, Muslim professional and youths held a multisectoral meeting.

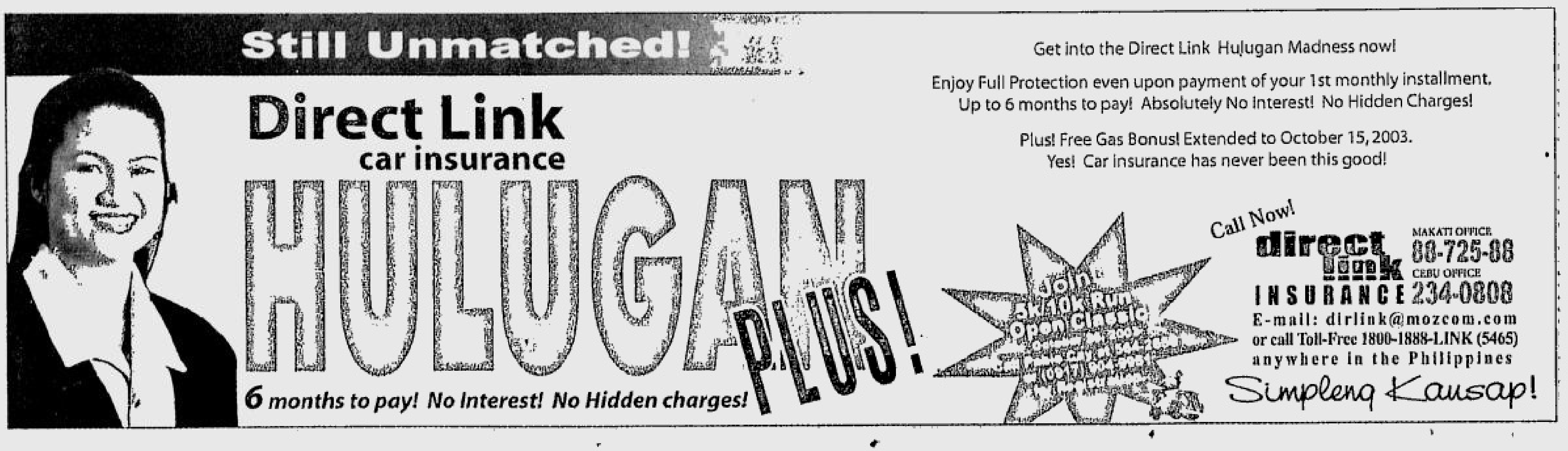
During the meeting, the participants from various sectors agreed to form the Sarangani People's Action for Reform and Good Governance (Spargg). They will send a petition to Malacañang, DILG and the Ombudsman to immediately suspend the officials allegedly involved to protect the documents and witnesses while the investigation is ongoing.

Escobar said even "God will not be happy" with what the religious and other sectoral leaders would be doing.

The governor claimed that when he signed the documents, he was just performing his ministerial function as chief executive of the province.

He asked the leaders of Spargg to help him set up a strong foundation for unity, instead of holding protest actions that would further polarize the constituents of the province.

He welcomed the investigation by the NBI to ferret out the truth. He said that the investigating committee he himself had created is now working to get to the bottom of the scam.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Simpleng Kausap!

Villa San Miguel will continue to be House of (Cardinal) Sin

From page A1

cause it is near the Cardinal Santos Memorial Medical Center, where he usually goes for treatment.

In a Mass said yesterday, however, a priest said that Sin will remain in Villa San Miguel, while the new Archbishop of Manila, Most. Rev. Gaudencio Rosales, will be based at the Arzobispado, the archdiocesan center in Intramuros, Manila.

Last prelate resigned 1902

The last Manila prelate to resign was Bernardino Nozaleda, O.P., who quit in 1902. Three of the four archbishops who followed him died in office: Michael O'Doherty in 1949, Gabriel Reyes in 1952, and Rufino Cardinal Santos in 1973.

Canon 402 of the Roman Catholic Church's code of canon law states that a bishop whose resignation from office has been accepted acquires the title "emeritus."

"If he wishes, he may have a residence in the diocese, unless, because of special circumstances, the Apostolic See provides otherwise," says the provision.

Applied to Sin's case, the provision means that the Manila archdiocese has some responsibility for taking care of Sin's welfare as he spends his twilight years. It says the Catholic Bishop Conference of the Philippines "must ensure that suitable and worthy provision is made for the upkeep of a bishop who has resigned, bearing in mind that primary obligations which falls on the diocese which he served."

President's statement

Malacañang issued a second statement on the occasion of Sin's retirement.

"He may have retired but his leadership and guidance will live on," President Macapagal Arroyo said, hailing Sin as a champion of Philippine democracy.

"He will be missed very much but we will always turn to him for his wise and endearing counsel on doing what is right and just," the President said.

Tribute

Ms Macapagal paid tribute to Sin's role in the two People Power revolts that installed her in Malacañang in 2001 and Corazon Aquino in 1986.

"He brought the church squarely behind the fight for human freedom and strengthened its role in the transformation of government, nation and people," Ms Macapagal said.

The President also extended a warm welcome to Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales of Lipa as Sin's successor.

"I join our people in welcoming His Eminence Gaudencio Rosales as the new Archbishop of Manila, whom I am confident will carry the torch of the faith, as a catalyst for positive change and as an instrument of good governance, just as ably and valiantly as his predecessor," the President said.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the government expects to maintain good relations with the Catholic church with the change in leadership.

"The policy of government is to always respect the Church as an institution," he said.

Bunye hailed Sin as a true shepherd of the flock and as a champion of freedom and democracy during critical periods in the country's history.

"So we wish him well in his retirement and we also welcome the new archbishop, Cardinal Rosales," Bunye said.

December 8

By virtue of his new office, Rosales may likely be the country's next cardinal.

Sin will remain one, a privilege which allows him to participate and vote in future papal elections (called conclaves) until he turns 80. After that, he can only participate but not vote.

No date has been set for Rosales' assumption to the archbishopric, although Papal Nuncio Archbishop Antonio Franco earlier said it may take place on December 8, feast of the Immaculate Conception. The Blessed Virgin Mary is the patroness of the archdiocese.

Rosales, in accordance with Canon 418, is required to take possession of his archdiocese within two months after receiving notification of his appointment.

Rosales will retire in 2007.

Three more Filipino prelates will reach the age of mandatory retirement next year. They are Archbishop Edmundo Abaya of Nueva Segovia in Ilocos Sur, who will turn 75 on Jan. 19, 2004; Bishop Francisco Claver, S.J., vicar apostolic of Bontoc-Lagawa, who turns 75 on Jan. 20; and Bishop Jose Sorra of Legazpi in Albay, who will be 75 on March 9. *With a report from AP*

GAUDENCIO "DENCY" ROSALES: In his presence you really feel that you are with a servant, not a prince (of the church).

PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Divine timing . . .

From page A1

program to be initiated by the Church, government or private sector "should be a critique of and an alternative to globalization."

Not a prince

The Cavite-based Dizon said he had also worked with Rosales on various Church projects and said he found the bishop to be a "very simple, approachable person, with protocol among his least concerns."

"In his presence you will really feel that you are with a servant, not a prince; he treats priests (under his diocese) not as subordinates but partners," he said.

But will Rosales be as actively involved in national politics as his predecessor, Jaime Cardinal Sin?

Dizon said that from what he knows of Rosales, "for him politics as a human activity has a moral dimension, but at the same time he knows that partisan politics is the realm of the laity and not within the competence of Church leaders."

Therefore, Dizon said, don't expect Rosales to support or campaign against a particular candidate in the 2004 elections.

Apostle of 'depoliticization'

From page A1

But Church leaders also looked at Rosales, who is already 71 and set to retire in four years, as a "transitional figure." He is someone who will tone down the highly charged political climate that has been left in the wake of his highly politically active predecessor, but who will have to play politics occasionally since the Church is both of this world and not of it. "He will still defend justice and peace, uphold solidarity with the suffering, and indirectly deal with politics," Gomez said.

A calm, benevolent presence, Rosales is considered somebody who won't agitate the clergy or the faithful. Doctrinally conservative like Sin and most Filipino Catholics, he will stress doctrinal unity and evade divisive issues.

Rosales was the most senior of the serious contenders to the Manila archbishopric, and the Vatican has chosen somebody who has the safest track record, who will not linger and thus unduly put his personal stamp on the archdiocese—still the country's most important, despite the creation of five new dioceses.

Knows Manila

Rosales is a safe choice because he knows Manila, having been an auxiliary bishop of Manila in the 1970s under Sin before he was assigned as bishop to Malaybalay, Bukidnon, in 1982. The only other serious contender with a Manila record was Caceres (Naga) Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi, a scholarly Dominican who was also at one time Manila assistant bishop.

Thus, Rosales can bank on his knowledge of the archdiocese and build from there. But unlike Sin, who became archbishop of Manila only in his 40s and went on to reign for nearly 30 years, he won't be around that long to make of Manila a personal demesne.

The choice of Rosales, therefore, has echoes of the case of Archbishop Gabriel Reyes, the first Filipino archbishop of Manila, who was plucked out of the Jaro, Iloilo, archdiocese to replace Archbishop Michael O'Doherty in 1949.

The Vatican at that time had wanted to remake Manila into a truly Filipino archdiocese after the rather long years of Americanization under O'Doherty. And O'Doherty, like Sin, had been able to put his personal stamp on the archdiocese because he was the Manila prelate for practically the entire American period. He was in fact the longest-serving Manila archbishop in history (serving from 1916 to 1949).

While O'Doherty showed certain personal strengths such as when he stood up to the Japanese during the Occupation, he also left the archdiocese in a precarious financial position.

But Reyes' task was hobbled by his ignorance of Manila and his frail health. It was left to his successor Rufino Santos, at that time the archbishop of Lipa, to remake Manila into a totally Filipino archdiocese and a spiritual, political and financial powerhouse.

When Santos died in 1973, the archdiocese had three banks and a financial strength that made it one of the richest archdioceses in the world.

Best qualities

In a way, the best qualities of Reyes and Santos are joined in Rosales. Wise and advanced in years like Reyes, Rosales is expected to emphasize the spiritual riches of the Church. To be sure, he will be severely limited in any attempt to make of the archdiocese a personal case by his short term. A former auxiliary bishop of Manila like Santos (who was O'Doherty's assistant), Rosales also has enough personal knowledge and managerial ability to build and improve on what Cardinal Sin has left.

Rosales is also in a position to address the other dire concerns of the Church. As head of the commission on Clergy of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, he is the Philippine Church's main man in responding to clerical sexual abuses and misdemeanors. The Commission in fact will come out with a protocol on clerical sexual conduct in January.

It is important, according to La Union Bishop and Novaliches Apostolic Administrator Antonio Tobias, for the Church to address the issue in a way that will promote the healing of both the victimizer and the victim.

While addressing the controversy, Rosales will also have his hands full with concerns about poverty and injustice, politically explosive issues.

Sin's legacy

It cannot be otherwise. The new appointee would have to contend with the political legacy of Sin. What is not apparent for many is that all of the serious contenders were politically active, albeit in a less apparent way than Cardinal Sin, who never backed out of a political slugfest.

It is important to note that Sin made his political sallies with some aid from the other bishops. He might have delivered the tearful homily at the funeral of Ninoy Aquino, but it was Legaspi who blessed the martyr's body when it was laid to rest in Manila Memorial Park. Sin might have made emotionally ringing cries for the poor, but Rosales made preferential option for the poor a consistent thrust in Bukidnon. He might have decried military abuses, but it was Orlando Quevedo when he was bishop of Kidapawan and Tobias when he was bishop of Pagadian who stared back at the guns of the military and lived to tell the tale.

Sin might have called for the two Edsas in Manila, but Legaspi, Rosales, Quevedo, Fernando Capalla, Oscar Cruz and Ricardo Cardinal Vidal all called for their own Edsas in their own dioceses, helping make the twin Manila revolutions possible.

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Fiery welcome for Bush in RP

From page A1

the flags would not be easy because of the "maximum security plan" of President Macapagal-Arroyo for Bush.

"Ms Macapagal's maximum security plan would pave the way to a possible crackdown and harassment of militant organizations as an extravagant display of subservience to the United States," Ramos said.

While KMP members would stage a long march, thousands of workers would walk out of their factories to protest Bush's visit. The Partido ng Manggagawa said the walkout was aimed at preventing Bush "from stepping on Philippine soil."

Officials said police and military authorities have been placed on high alert to thwart violent protests vowed by militant groups during the state visit.

There have also been concerns of possible terrorist attacks, after the arrest last month of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) Muslim militant Hambali by US authorities.

Militant protesters yesterday marched on the US Embassy in Manila to condemn the upcoming visit. The demonstrators carried signs saying "No Bush allowed" and other anti-US slogans as riot police blocked their path.

Airing frustrations

Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said the protests would not diminish the significance of what both countries hoped to achieve in the visit.

"Those who oppose our strategic partnership with the US have achieved nothing so far except ventilate their frustration. Our relations with the US continue to grow strong and our cooperative efforts, particularly in the war against terror, have proven successful," Ople said.

He said reparations were being undertaken to ensure that the protest actions remained lawful and peaceful.

"There may be those who will probably hope to dramatize their cause by resorting to violent and unlawful acts. We of course will respond in a firm but lawful manner," said Ople, chair of the National Committee in Charge of the State Visit of President George W. Bush.

RALLIES in the runup to their mass protest actions for the Bush visit are held by militant groups near the US Embassy. They are protesting the dominance of the developed countries in the World Trade Organization and the US visiting forces.
ERIK ARAZAS

Most powerful President

Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia said the military could not let its guard down. "This is the President of the world's most powerful country," Garcia told the INQUIRER.

Should the KMP miss Bush's arrival due to the secrecy that comes with the security preparations of the US Secret Service and its Philippine counterpart, the flag burning activity would be conducted at the Chino Roces bridge (formerly Mendiola) near Malacañang, the group said. Ms Macapagal will host a state dinner for Bush in Malacañang.

"But we are also considering the front of the US Embassy for the protest action," KMP spokesperson Jim Fernando said.

Fernando said the peasant group alone hoped to mobilize 5,000 marches from all over Luzon.

"In the spirit of the bases treaty rejection in 1991, we are rejecting Bush's planned visit. Bush and his dirty wars are not welcome in the Philippines," Renato Reyes Jr., spokesperson of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, at a news conference.

"Should he push through, he will be met with protest actions from all possible entry points in the country," Reyes said. *With a report from Martin Posadas Marfil*

GMA hails emergence of Cancun 20

From page A1

World subsidies to farm sectors at the 5th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which collapsed Sunday.

"We shall continue to work with this alliance in order to defend and preserve the welfare and livelihood of our farmers, fisher folk and all those who struggle in the margins of our economy," the President said.

"We cannot have political security, both in the national and global sense, if we cannot ensure economic security at the grassroots. The developing countries must stick together to uphold this principle."

Trade Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II, Philippine chief trade negotiator, said, "No deal is better than a bad deal."

Rep. Satur Ocampo (Bayan Muna) yesterday called for a "serious re-evaluation" of the government's commitment to trade liberalization policies, which he said, proved "ruinous to domestic industry and agriculture."

"The Cancun post mortem should serve as an opportunity for a rethinking of economic policies, especially for the Third World," Ocampo said.

Ocampo said the global trade regime could not proceed "without extensively addressing gross inequalities between rich and poor countries that were aggravated by the WTO agreements."

He cited the disparity between rich and developing nations with respect to domestic farm and export subsidies that allow products from the former to dominate the world market due to cheaper prices.

"Average government subsidy for each cow is $2 in the European Union, while in the Philippines, 52.6 million Filipinos, or 67 per cent of the population, live on $1.74 (about P94) a day," Ocampo said.

But eliminating massive farm subsidies in the US and in EU will not improve the lot of peasants in developing countries, according to the Asia Pacific Network on Food Sovereignty.

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A CELEBRATION of the triumph of the developing countries in Cancun, Mexico after the crucial World Trade Organization ministerial conference to spur momentum toward a new global trade pact collapsed. At center is Filipino activist/professor Walden Bello.
AFP

Should the subsidies be lifted, foreign transnational corporations would still control world trade and continue to push domestic producers out of the picture, Apnes' Frank Pascual said in a statement.

3 courses of action

Ocampo listed three courses of action for the Philippine government to protect local manufacturers and farmers:

- Enhancing quantitative restrictions (QRs) on imported rice and putting up of QRs on basic farm products like corn, vegetables, poultry and meat.
- Reneging on commitments to receive aid from the United States through the US Public Law 480 and other similar programs that serve as vehicles for dumping American surplus farm products on the country.
- Increasing the country's tariffs from the current average of 5.7 percent to at least 10.3 percent to be at par with Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. *Reports from Gil Cabacungan Jr., Carlito Pablo, Michelle V. Remo and AFP*

PLAYMATES at Classmate turn their faces away from the cameras during the Ebdane raid on the hot nightspot in Quezon City. RANDY HORMILLOSA

THE EBDANE raid found no cops wining and dining women of the night. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Classmate
DIGITAL KTV

NO LESS than elite members of the Special Weapons and Tactics Group man the entry point to Classmate KTV in Quezon Avenue. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Ebdane leads media bar hopping in QC

From page A1

"operation" to be personally led by Ebdane. This prompted widespread speculation that the fugitive Indonesian bomber Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi had been recaptured—a possibility that the PNP officials neither confirmed nor denied.

But Ebdane and company, backed by members of the elite Special Weapons and Tactics, found no police officers when they arrived at Classmate at around 10:30 p.m. and at Mystique around 30 minutes later.

Bottles with cops' names

During the inspection at Mystique, Ebdane and his retinue—including his deputy Reynaldo Velasco and Directors Enrique Galang and Ricardo de Leon—found bottles of liquor bearing the names of supposed police officers.

It is apparently common practice in high-end clubs for guests to buy liquor by the bottle and have their names posted on it. This means that the liquor is exclusively for their consumption.

The names on the bottles were those of Colonels Sosa, Vero and Ruiz; Captains Reyes, Taniel and Popoy; Sergeants Jun Ceballos and Divina; and a certain Samson.

"Policemen should not go to these places. Whatever they earn should go straight to their families," Ebdane told reporters at Classmate.

He said that with regular policemen earning only around P10,000 a month, their presence in expensive nightclubs such as Classmate and Mystique was "questionable."

"If they are not paying, it means they have sponsors," he said.

Asked yesterday at a press conference in Camp Crame if the PNP would investigate and summon the police officers whose names were posted on the bottles, Ebdane said: "How can we investigate this when no one was arrested?"

He said he had ordered extra surveillance on the establishments "to get additional evidence that [the officers] are still using these bottles."

Red Plate Project

Other party animals in the government cannot have wine, women and song while they're driving around in red-plated cars.

Assistant Ombudsman Ernesto Nocos, spokesperson of the Office of the Ombudsman, said it was intensifying its campaign to spot government cars parked outside high-end nightclubs, massage parlors, or country clubs offering night-time golf.

"We are reviving in earnest our Operation Red Plate Project," he told the INQUIRER.

Nocos said the program was launched specifically to discourage government officials from using government-issued cars to engage in social activities beyond as regular office hours and into the night.

He said the project involved the Junior Graft watch, utilizing the services of college students.

But he also called for volunteers, including civilians frequenting nightclubs, security guards and parking attendants, to provide tips on government officials going to nightclubs using red-plated cars.

Cops to live like priests?

"We are not just going to peek into their expensive night-time fun, we are also going to check if they are using cars bought with taxpayers' money to engage in their social activities after work," Nocos said.

He said those doing so without "official mission orders" were liable for abuse of authority under the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

Ebdane also said police officers should be reminded of an existing policy against their presence in nightclubs and beerhouses.

The policy is so strict that law enforcers are barred from going to these places even if they are not on duty, he said.

PNP spokesperson De Leon said Monday night that the policy was intended to encourage police officers to focus on their jobs the following day.

Ebdane said he was now contemplating deploying "secret agents" to nightclubs and even gay bars.

But a police officer said these restrictions could lead Ebdane's moral crusade to failure.

"Do they expect policemen to live like priests?" said the officer who asked not to be named.

'Happy' wives

At yesterday's press conference, Ebdane said the wives of policemen had expressed elation over his reminder to PNP personnel of the policy prohibiting them from patronizing nightclubs.

"Based on our feedback, [the wives] seem happier. Maybe because their husbands now come home at an earlier time," he told reporters.

He said he had also received calls from women thanking him for reminding their husbands of the ban.

Ebdane also reminded policemen that the existing policy included a ban on casinos, cockpits and gambling joints. He said these places were "strictly off-limits to cops."

The PNP Directorate for Operations headed by Galang issued yesterday an instruction to all regional, provincial, municipal and city PNP units to conduct "periodic inspection of nightclubs and funhouses to insure compliance with the [policy]."

Galang noted that there had again been violent incidents inside nightspots involving some PNP personnel. "In many instances, these personnel were even seen carrying firearms. This is gross violation of existing rules and must be checked and stopped," he said. *With reports from Alcuin Valle Papa and Armand Nocum*

DOLE: 4.35 million Filipinos jobless

From page A1

As defined by the National Statistics Office (NSO), the unemployed are those who looked for work but did not find any.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said the bulk of the unemployment was in the agriculture, fishing and forestry sectors which accounted for 760,000 unemployed Filipinos. This development negated the employment gains made in the industry sector which registered an increase of 259,000 and the service sector which posted an increase of 254,000.

The underemployment rate last July was 20.8 percent, compared to 17.1 percent in July 2002. Of the underemployed, 10.8 percent were "visibly underemployed," that is, those who were employed for less than 40 hours a week.

NSO data showed that more than half of those employed were wage and salary workers, while around one-third were unpaid family workers.

In terms of occupation, 27.1 percent of employed individuals were laborers and unskilled workers, 19.4 percent were farmers, forestry workers and fishermen, and 10.2 percent were corporate executive and government and special interest organization employees.

Weather, SARS, Iraq war

Sto. Tomas blamed the rise in unemployment to poor weather conditions, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), the United States-led war on Iraq and the global financial crisis.

Sto. Tomas said that last May, there were tropical storms in Luzon and the Visayas while El Niño ravaged Mindanao. Two typhoons in June and July brought widespread flooding in Northern Luzon.

"We are not looking for scapegoats here but the reality is that we were ranged against these vicissitudes which I am optimistic we can overcome," Sto. Tomas said in a statement.

A government economist, on the other hand, said the aggregate unemployment figure could mislead people into thinking that there was a decline in the economy.

"If you look at the details more closely, conditions actually improved," said Scholastica Cororaton of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

She pointed out that while while there was an increase in unemployment in the agriculture sector, there was higher employment in the industry and services sectors.

"A better gauge (of the economy) is industry and services. Agriculture is really very volatile," she said.

No cause for alarm

Economic analyst Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities Inc. said the rise in unemployment last July was no cause for alarm.

But he expressed apprehension that the decline in employment in the agriculture sector could lead farmers to migrate to Metro Manila.

"There's a fear of agricultural workers migrating to services or manufacturing. As there is no perceived uptick in these industries, the Metro Manila unemployment rate may go up," he said.

3 million new jobs

The Macapagal administration had earlier announced that it was targeting the creation of three million jobs this year. This is divided into one million for the private sector, one million for overseas deployment and another million for local employment.

But Sto. Tomas, in an earlier interview, admitted that September figures showed that overseas deployment had dropped by 30,000 compared to the same period last year. Overseas deployment figures last year did not reach one million.

Sto. Tomas, however, said she was still confident the labor market will "bounce back" in due time.

"The labor market is resilient enough to recover from this setback. As the survey shows, more people found full-time work in July, rising by six percent, or 1.101 million," she said.

Abigail Ho, Martin Marfil

Surprise: Lakas wants GMA for 2004

From page A1

Macapagal-Arroyo as standard-bearer in 2004 when the party's national directorate convenes on Oct. 7. But Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. yesterday said so—predictably .

"There is an overwhelming sentiment for the President to run," De Venecia said in an interview over ABS-CBN News Channel and in a subsequent statement issued at the House.

Senatorial slate

"Maybe there will be a decision in the Oct. 7 meeting to appeal to the President for her to run in the name of national interest," he said, but added that Ms Macapagal would not attend the convention "because she has not decided" on the matter.

The 400-member national directorate that includes governors and mayors will also "most likely make a decision" on the party's senatorial ticket composed of 12 candidates, De Venecia said.

The President and the Speaker co-chair the ruling party.

According to De Venecia, Lakas members have been urging Ms Macapagal to stand for election "and answer all these wild accusations"—an apparent reference to the "Jose Pidal" exposé of opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who said First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo was keeping laundered money in multimillion-peso bank accounts.

Lacson is himself a declared contender for the presidency,

De Venecia, however, acknowledged that certain quarters in Lakas were pushing for businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. or former education secretary Raul Roco as standard-bearer.

Danding Cojuangco

Cojuangco is the patron of the Nationalist People's Coalition, a major ally of Lakas. Roco heads the Aksyon Demokratiko, a member of the ruling People Power Coalition.

The NPC is supporting De Venecia's active campaign to amend the 1987 Constitution and bring about a shift to a parliamentary form and federal system of government.

Cojuangco, chair of the food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp., has postponed to Sept. 30 his announcement of whether he would run for president in 2004. He was an also-ran in the 1992 elections.

De Venecia described Cojuangco as "another popular choice," next to Ms Macapagal.

Rep. Jacinto Paras of Negros Occidental said that per the assessment of political leaders who attended his recent birthday party, Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda would most likely be Cojuangco's running mate if he decides to run for president.

Oct. 7 convention

The convention of the Lakas national directorate was set for Oct. 7 because lawmakers from the provinces would have returned to Manila for the resumption of session on Oct. 6, De Venecia said.

Oct. 7 is less than two weeks before Oct. 18, the scheduled arrival of US President George W. Bush in Manila for an 8-hour visit.

Speculations are rife that the Bush visit will constitute an endorsement of Ms Macapagal's candidacy.

Last Dec. 30 in Baguio City, the President sprang a surprise when she announced that she would not run in next year's elections. But she has not stopped her officials and allies from publicly saying that she should reconsider her decision.

A Malacañang insider said in May that Bush told Ms Macapagal during her state visit in Washington that women, like politicians, were entitled to change their mind.

De Venecia indicated that by next month, the ruling party would "make a series of decisions and movements" in preparation for the 2004 elections.

'The solution'

Paras said that at his party held recently in Guihulngan town, Legarda said "Cojuangco is the solution the country is looking for."

A statement issued by Paras' office said that at least 10,000 political leaders and well-wishers were in attendance, and that they all heard Legarda saying that Cojuangco "understands the complexities of the country's economic problems and will provide solutions to them."

The statement named the following as expressing support for the Cojuangco-Legarda tandem during an ensuing consultation meeting with political leaders: Governors Joseph Maranon of Negros Oriental and George Arnaez of Negros Occidental, Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos, former Sen. Ernesto Maceda, GMA-7's Jay Sonza, and all city and municipal mayors and barangay chairs of the Negros provinces.

In his speech at the birthday party, Cojuangco said the Philippines' spiraling foreign debt and the meager resources for infrastructure and development projects were the country's main concerns at the moment.

He deplored the "propensity of the Supreme Court to usurp Congress' legislative functions, thereby scaring local and foreign investors from establishing new economic and business ventures."

Disclosing his concept of governance, Cojuangco proposed a "small government" concentrating on health, education and infrastructure, with the private sector as the main engine for economic growth.

He said the private sector could creditably perform its functions if the government would provide a concrete policy direction and support. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

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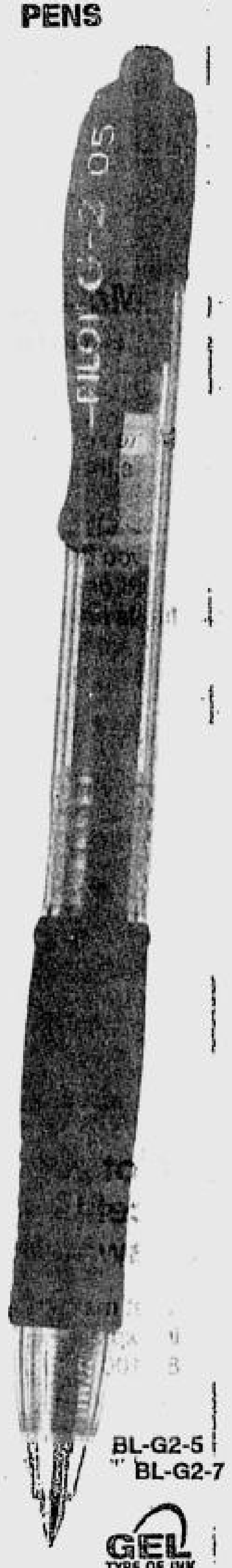

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Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

Nightlife check hurting us, QC bar owners cry

By Tina Santos and Nelson Flores

OWNERS of high-end nightspots in Quezon City yesterday condemned the "nightlife checks" of the national police, claiming that the spot checks would financially set back their business.

Perry Mariano, spokesperson of the Association of Clubs, Karaoke and Disco Operators in Quezon City, also denied the newspaper report that a group of ranking police officials were robbed by remnants of the Kuratong Baleleng gang as they were enjoying themselves inside the classy nightclub Classmates on Quezon Avenue.

On Monday night, Philippine National Police officials under Director General Hermogenes Ebdane made the rounds of the controversial nightspots, particularly those on Quezon Avenue, after President Macapagal-Arroyo called on lawmen to stop patronizing such establishments.

The President was reportedly upset when she heard the news of the nightclub robbery.

Hard to cover up

On Tuesday, Central Police District and national police officials also dismissed the report, saying that the robbery had taken place outside the nightclub and that a Classmates employee was the one who was robbed.

Perry Mariano, himself a club operator, said that it would be very hard to cover up such a big incident, saying a violent commotion would have surely erupted if the incident had indeed happened. He also said that if there was such an incident, they would not hide it and would even ask the help of authorities.

"These (nightlife checks) would really affect our businesses, we might even go bankrupt because it might scare away our patrons," Mariano told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. "Business would probably drop by 100 percent."

He said the nightlife checks, where authorities would conduct raids on nightspots to check on their colleagues, would only compromise the privacy of their other clients.

"How would they still patronize our businesses if they are always under threat (of raids)," he asked. "How would they relax and enjoy if they knew that they no longer have the privacy inside the establishments?"

He revealed that many police officials do frequent the nightspots and have been "contributing largely" to the flourishing trade.

"Most of them go to the clubs in groups, especially if they have guests."

Others, he said, enter the establishment for free or "out of goodwill," especially when they personally know the owners.

Right to enjoy

But Mariano was quick to defend the lawmen, saying that they too have the "right to relax and enjoy."

Mariano also criticized the authorities for checking on their colleagues frequenting nightspots, when they should be hunting down criminals.

On Monday, another nightclub owner revealed that he and his colleagues have been forced to hire additional security personnel to secure their establishments.

Amil Yap, a club owner and member of the Association of Club, Karaoke, and Disco Owners, said that they are only taking precautions after they heard of the Classmates robbery.

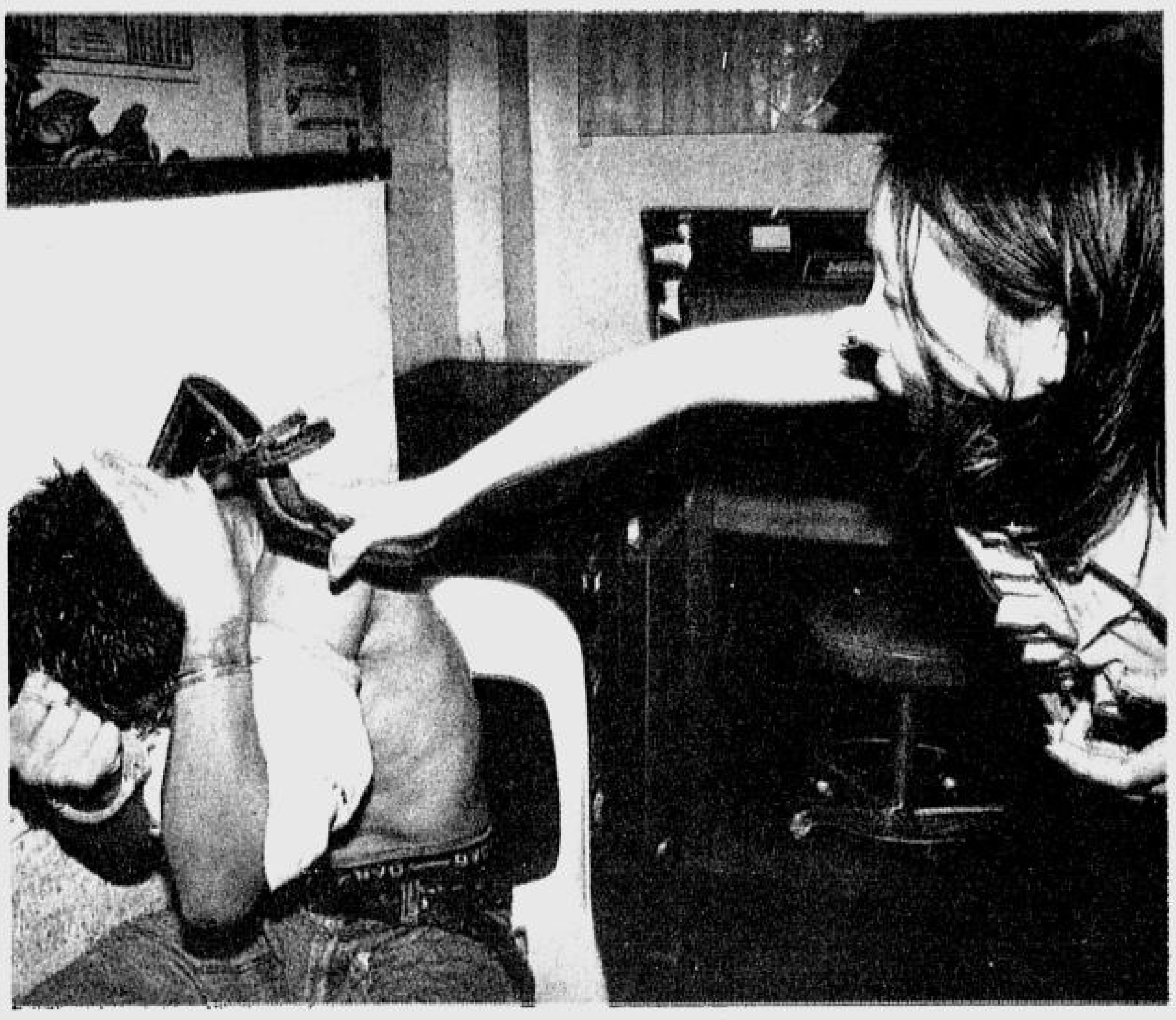
According to the report, a group of men armed with assault rifles and Uzi submachine guns, stormed the Classmates nightspot and and robbed a number of police superintendents and an official of the Department of Interior and Local Government.

No such thing

But according to Supt. Cesar Binag, CPD Station 10 commander, no such thing happened.

He admitted though that he had received a report that an employee of the nightclub was robbed in the vicinity about two weeks ago.

The DILG public information office also said that they have not received any information about ranking department personnel falling prey to robbers inside a nightspot.



WELL-HEELED

Irish Umayam, alleged victim of suspected snatcher, Zaldy Dampayla, lands a well-aimed shoe on the head of the hapless man in a Manila police station, shortly after Dampayla was arrested for robbery. The suspect allegedly grabbed the victim's bag in Paco, Manila. The woman fought back, breaking a nail in the process. IPI

Cops lose gun, paychecks to thieves in QC

TWO POLICE officers lost a gun and their paychecks to thieves who broke into their van while they were attending a class in crime detection in Quezon City.

SP01 Cerilo Frias, 40, of St. Francis Village, Caloocan, and P03 Marissa Gonzales said that the theft occurred between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. while they were attending a field training exercise in Cubao.

The two officers are attending a course in criminal investigation and detection and development at the PNP Detective School in Camp Crame.

Frias claimed he lost his .45-caliber pistol, while Gonzales said she lost her shoulder bag, which contained P26,000 in cash, 33 pieces of paychecks and other valuables, which was supposed to be used as payment for the student cops at the end of the course.

Frias parked his Lite Ace van (UNF 648) on Gen. Romulo Street, Araneta Center in Cubao, investigators said.

Frias said he and Gonzales were surprised when they saw that the front passenger door of his vehicle was open.

He said they went back to the van at around 4 p.m. to get their course handbooks.

The suspects apparently used a false key in destroying his car door lock, investigators said. *Tina Santos*

Youth slain in QC frat violence

A MINOR was killed while another was seriously injured on Sunday in Quezon City.

Police said Bernardo Onillo, 16, of Bagong Barrio, Caloocan City, died on the spot while his friend Ramil Palomata, 15, remains in critical condition after they were shot by still unidentified members of a rival fraternity.

Investigators said that the two boys were walking on Quezon Park, Barangay Unang Sigaw, Quezon City at around 4:30 p.m. on Sunday to meet up with a friend, when they met members of a rival group.

The two groups later got into a fight.

Police said one of the suspects was armed with a handgun. He shot the victims before he fled with his fraternity mates.

Ondillo was shot several times, police said.

The victim was taken to the Manila Central University where he was declared dead on arrival.

Palomata is still under observation at the Quezon City General Hospital for a lone gunshot wound in the body, police said.

In another incident, Sharon Takaisan, 17, of Barangay Pasong Tamo, Quezon City was killed instantly when the gun of driver Mario dela Cruz went off accidentally.

Police said dela Cruz was drunk when he started showing off the gun to his friends at around 6:30 p.m Sunday. *Tina Santos*

6 men abduct Chinese in Malabon

SIX MEN, described as "clean-cut, boy-next-door" types, yesterday kidnapped a Chinese-Filipino businessman in front of his store in Malabon City.

Malabon City police chief Supt. Pedro Ramos said William Tan Uy, 45, owner of Kaunlaran Construction Supply, was abducted at around 7 a.m. yesterday as soon as he got off his white Nissan Frontier (YWU 888) in front of his hardware store on Lapu-Lapu Avenue corner Martiniko Street, Barangay Longos, Malabon City.

Witnesses told police they did not suspect that the six armed men were criminals, adding that they looked "very decent."

Witnesses said the suspects were about 35 to 40 years old, well built, good-looking, and stood at about 5-foot-9. They added that the men were wearing beige or khaki shirts and black slacks.

Witnesses said the suspects approached Uy and, with guns drawn, ordered the businessman back inside his pickup.

They said Uy, a resident of Binondo, Manila, tried to put up a fight. But one of the suspects fired a shot and warned the businessman not to make a false move.

The suspects then boarded the pickup after shoving Uy in the vehicle and drove toward Dagat-dagatan Avenue.

Ramos said the suspects knew the victim's routine. He added that they have yet to determine the motive behind the abduction.

Ramos said members of the victim's family are now cooperating with the police, after showing reluctance at first.

The family said they have not yet received any ransom demands from the abductors.

A lawman said the case has not yet been turned over to the national police, but local authorities have sought the help of the Philippine Anti-crime and Emergency Response in the investigation. *Tina Santos*

PARAÑAQUE Mayor Joey Marquez and former city Mayor Pablo Olivares (second and third from left) have finally made peace, ending a nine-year political feud. With them are Councilor Anjo Yllana and PR consultant Ric Lim.

Volunteers all set for bay cleanup

THOUSANDS of volunteers are expected to undertake a massive cleanup of Manila Bay on Saturday, Sept. 20.

The activity, dubbed as Save Manila Bay, is organized by the International Marinelife-Alliance Philippines (IMA), a nonprofit, nongovernment organization working to protect marine environments and conserve marine biodiversity in the country.

The activity is being done in line with the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) project, the largest volunteer cleanup effort initiated by The Ocean Conservancy, an environmental NGO based in Washington, D.C.

The project is carried out every third Saturday of September in over 100 countries, including the Philippines.

Volunteers who want to join the Manila Bay cleanup may register at IMA registration center at the Luneta Park at 7 a.m. on Saturday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has been invited to grace the event and deliver an inspirational talk. The cleanup proper will start at 8:10 a.m. *Jocelyn Uy*

Marquez, Olivarez end 9-year feud

By Marinel Cruz

PARAÑAQUE City Mayor Joey Marquez and his perennial rival Pablo Olivarez have decided to bury the hatchet after the latter paid the mayor a visit in the last week of August.

There are strong speculations, however, that Olivares made peace with Marquez because of his intention to run for mayor of Parañaque in the May 2004 elections.

Marquez is on his third and last term as mayor, a position which Olivarez had failed to take away from the incumbent.

Marquez told the INQUIRER that he might seek a seat in Congress in 2004.

"I was surprised to hear from my assistant that he (Olivarez) wished to talk with me and was waiting outside my office," Marquez said in a telephone interview on Tuesday. "He arrived at 9 a.m. and just like everyone else, he waited for his turn."

Marquez said Olivarez wanted to help by lending some of his heavy equipment to the city government without charge.

"We decided to unite for Parañaque. I'm also encouraging all former Parañaque mayors to do the same," said Marquez. "The city will not benefit from the political mudslinging and infighting."

The mayor added that he had invited Olivarez to be the guest speaker during last Tuesday's flag ceremony. He said he also asked former Parañaque mayors Wally Ferrer and Rudy Buenavista to join him as guests in the coming weeks.

Man uses toy gun to steal van in Manila

By Tarra Quismundo

A MAN who used a toy gun to steal a van has been arrested, police said.

Michael Sta. Teresa, 26, of Pasig Line, Sta. Ana, Manila, was caught Saturday night driving the Mercedes Benz van (WET 955) of Gerardo Garcia.

Driver Sonny Alemany said he came from Sta. Rosa, Laguna where he dropped off Garcia's family to attend a wedding.

On Vito Cruz Street, Alemany stopped by a store to buy a cigarette and left the van unlocked. When he went back to his van, Sta. Teresa was in the driver's seat.

Alemany said he tried to open the van's door, but Sta. Teresa threatened him with a pistol.

"I thought (the gun) was real, so I let go of the door," said Alemany in Filipino. "I tried to run after him. Then I saw a police car a few meters away."

It turned out Sta. Teresa's 9-mm pistol was a fake, police said.

Sta. Teresa was arrested around 8 p.m. the same night on Tramo Street, Pasay City, police said.

The suspect claimed that the driver had asked him to wash the van and that he just wanted to test-drive the vehicle. The suspect said that his father, whom he claimed to be a policeman, is mad at him.

In Sta. Cruz, Manila, police also arrested Gabriel Navarro, 23, of Quiapo, for stealing the Kawasaki motorcycle of Rolando Kabigting, at around 3 a.m. on Sept. 11.

Navarro, a jeepney barker in Sta. Cruz, denied the charges and said that he was just set up.

Maid flushes cager's gold necklace down toilet

By Luige del Puerto

THE LOCKED toilet gave her away.

That was how Redbull forward Michael Pennisi and his wife, Jennifer, discovered the theft perpetrated by their newly hired house help in San Juan on Sunday.

Consequently, the Pennisis of Platinum 2000 condominium on Annapolis Street lodged a case of qualified theft against Melani Acosta, 35, who had worked for them for only three days.

Acosta is now detained at the San Juan police station.

According to the statement of Jennifer to SPO2 Honorio Cartalla, she and her Filipino-Italian husband had just come from attending mass when they noticed their toilet door locked.

When they knocked on the door, Acosta reportedly responded, claiming that she was doing some cleaning.

Jennifer said she got suspicious because it was the first time Acosta locked the comfort room while cleaning it.

Jennifer went into the toilet and was surprised to find her jewelry box inside.

Acosta at first denied seeing or bringing the jewelry box there, but later confessed after being brought to the police station for investigation.

The helper broke down and admitted taking the valuables that were in the box, Cartalla said.

Acosta told the police she hid some of the jewelry in one of Pennisi's shoes.

She added that she put some of the valuables in the clothes she was wearing but feared that she would be frisked at the station.

So, Acosta said she dropped these under the seat of the police car that fetched her.

A search produced the jewelry.

A gold necklace, however, is gone forever because Acosta had flushed it down the toilet.

ANTI-CRIME PROBE

NCRPO chief eases minds of politicos

By Tina Santos

DEPUTY Director General Reynaldo Velasco yesterday moved to deflect a possible backlash that might arise from the order of President Macapagal-Arroyo for the police to look into probable links of some politicians to crime.

The head of the National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) assured all politicians that the probe would not be a witch-hunt.

The President on Monday told the national police to verify reports that some politicians were using bank robberies and other crimes to gather funds for their electoral bids in 2004.

"We will dig deeper into these cases especially the connection of some politicians as alleged by one congressman that the heists will be used for the May 2004 polls," Velasco said.

He said they were still unsure of whether the heists had something to do with the fund-raising drives of politicians.

The NCRPO chief pointed out that there had also been suspicion that the rash of criminality was meant to discredit and destabilize the government.

Velasco noted that the heists occurred immediately after the failed coup attempt of several military junior officers.

"We have yet to establish a concrete link between politicians and the bank robberies," the NCRPO chief stressed.

To kick off the investigation, Velasco has ordered a study about robbery incidents covering the years before national elections.

"If there will be a trend that the robbery incidents increased before elections, then we can zero in on this fund-raising aspect," he said.

However, Velasco was quick to add that poverty could be the main reason for the spate of robberies as indicated by the amount taken by the suspects.

"The amount being taken is not much. The risk is very high and many people are involved," he said.

The NCRPO chief added, "The main reason for robbery is economics. Nonetheless, we'll investigate further," he assured.

Velasco said that for the past nine months, at least 12 bank robbery incidents occurred in Metro Manila, which he admitted was "quite alarming."

Avenida for cars – DPWH

By Tarra Quismundo

HIS INTENTIONS are good but Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza cannot close any part of Rizal Avenue, a ranking official of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said yesterday.

"It should be open to vehicles," said DPWH Assistant Secretary Rafael Yabut in a phone interview.

Yabut and other DPWH officials had a meeting in City Hall the other day to discuss the closure of the avenue, which is undergoing pedestrianization.

"The project is good. In fairness to City Hall, the closure was for construction purposes. That's why we have to meet again to know their final plan," said Yabut.

A portion of Rizal Avenue from Carriedo Street to C.M. Recto Avenue, has been closed to vehicles since June to give way to the pedestrianization project of Atienza.

This has prompted Manila officials to reroute traffic in the area.

"The rerouting has even improved the traffic situation in the area compared to the situation when the portion was still open (to vehicles)," said City Engineer Armand Andres.

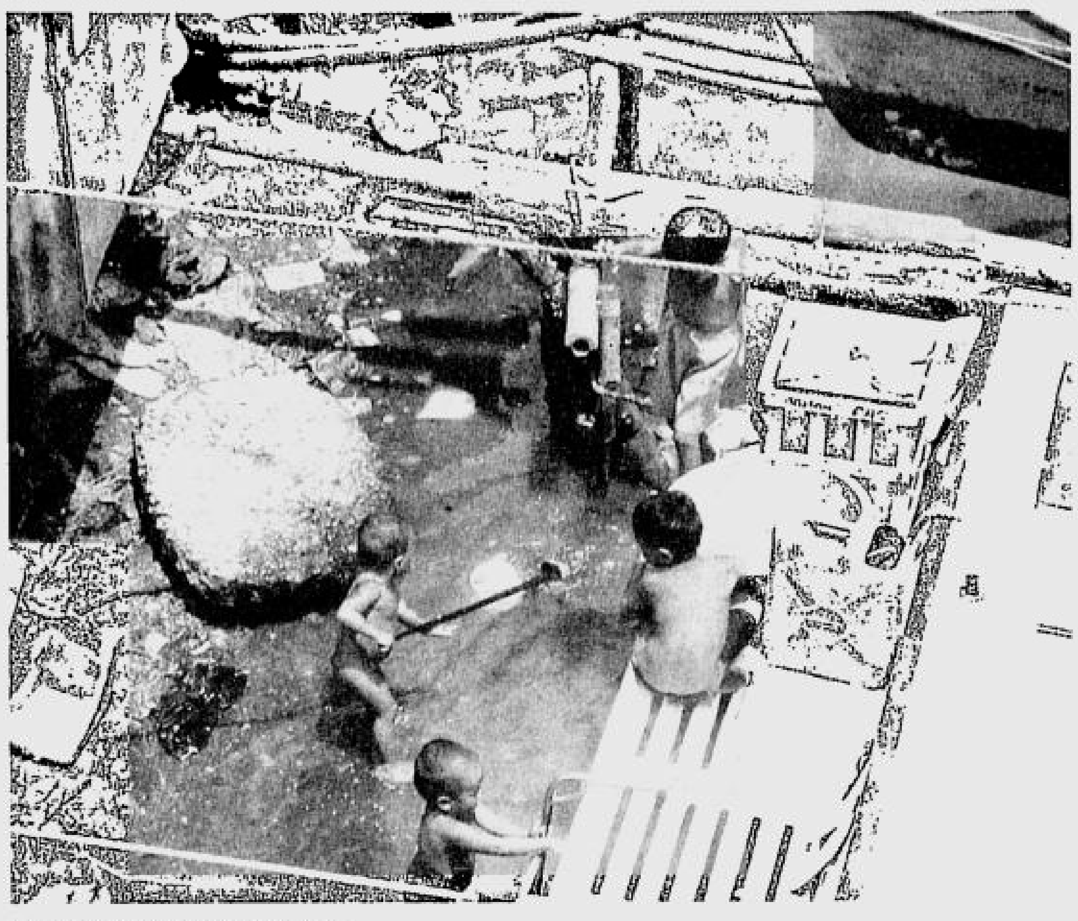
Yabut affirmed this, saying the alternate routes now in use were very helpful and could be considered as permanent additional routes to alleviate traffic congestion in the area.

However, he stressed that the closed portion of Avenida should again be opened to vehicles after construction work were done.

The project, which is part of Atienza's Buhayin ang Maynila program, seeks to turn Rizal Avenue into a shopping destination.

Based on City Hall's plan, the 500-meter stretch that is undergoing street paving with red, yellow, and grey tiles, is going to be an open walkway, with al fresco coffee shops where people go to between shopping.

DPWH officials are set to meet with City Hall officials to further discuss the project.



WATERY PLAYGROUND
The children of fishermen living along the Coastal Road in Parañaque frolick in their wet playground unmindful of the trash and other dangers that float around them.
RUDY ESPERAS

METROBRIEFS

In hot water

A POLICEMAN based in Camp Crame is in hot water for allegedly firing his gun during a drunken bout in Marikina City Monday night. P01 Oliver Leonicio of Malaya Street, Barangay Malanday, went berserk and fired his .45 caliber pistol. Investigating officer P03 Orlando Salem said the incident occurred at around 9 p.m. in front of Leoncio's home. The officer's neighbors called the police after Leoncio was already challenging everybody to a fight. But responding cops failed to bring the police officer to the station. He reportedly fled through the back door of his house after sensing the cops. He will be invited for questioning, the police said. *Luige del Puerto*

Bloody party

A BIRTHDAY party turned bloody on Sunday night after two men barged into the house of the victims in Morong, Rizal, and started shooting. Host Restituto Iso, 25, of Barangay Maybangcal never made it to the hospital alive. Two other guests were wounded during the shooting spree, the police said. They were identified as Edito Merba, 42, and Melchor de la Cruz, 20, both of Sitio Talaga in the same barangay. They are now confined at the Teresa Community Clinic. Belated reports reaching the Rizal Police headquarters revealed that Iso was celebrating the birthday of his son when two men armed with guns stormed into their house and opened fire. The suspects then fled. The police found seven empty shells and two live .36-caliber bullets at the crime scene. The police is still trying to determine the motive behind the killing. *Luige del Puerto*

Pasig cops score

THE POLICE continued to score against pretty criminals in Pasig City. Yesterday, three jeepney robbers fell to authorities after they alighted a few meters from where a mobile patrol car was parked. Within minutes, Archie Morales of Barangay Rosario, Roberto Casillan of Barangay Mangahan and Jeffrey Payo also of Barangay Rosario were collared. A fourth suspect managed to escape with the loot, the police said. Investigation showed that the four boarded a jeep in Barangay Sta. Lucia. When they reached Buenas Market on Felix Avenue in Barangay Mangahan, one of the suspects poked a homemade gun at Susan Bongon, a saleslady. They then took her handbag and alighted. Unfortunately for the suspects, a mobile patrol unit was parked nearby and the passengers were able to shout for help. *Luige del Puerto*

Quick hands

Richard Domingo thought he was doing someone a favor but instead ended up losing P1,000 to con men in Mandaluyong City. Investigation revealed that Domingo went to a vulcanizing shop a few blocks from his home at about 4 a.m. and met two men who wanted change for a P1,000 bill. Domingo handed them two P500 bills as change. For no apparent reason, the two wanted their P1,000 bill back so he gave it back to them. After the two had gone, he discovered that instead of returning his two P500 bills they gave him a P100 bill. *Luige del Puerto*

Blunder saves cop from death

By Luige del Puerto

A ROGUE antinarcotics agent escaped the death penalty by the skin of his teeth yesterday after prosecutors failed to mention in the charges against him that he was a government employee at the time he was caught in possession of illegal drugs.

Subsequently, P02 Elmer Ramos, a former member of the Eastern Police District Drug Enforcement Unit, was instead handed life imprisonment by the Pasig City Regional Trial Court.

Judge Librado Correa of Branch 164 also ordered Ramos to pay the government P500,000 for the offense.

Ramos was caught with 96.48 grams of shabu last year.

"As there is no allegation of the aggravating circumstance that accused is a government employee, the offense can not be qualified so as to impose the maximum of death penalty," Correa said in his decision.

Correa found the testimonies of Ramos' superior, Supt. Romeo Abaring, DDEU chief, credible and straightforward.

Records showed that in the morning of July 11, 2002, Abaring told his men to place all their belongings on a table after he received information that one of his men was hiding shabu.

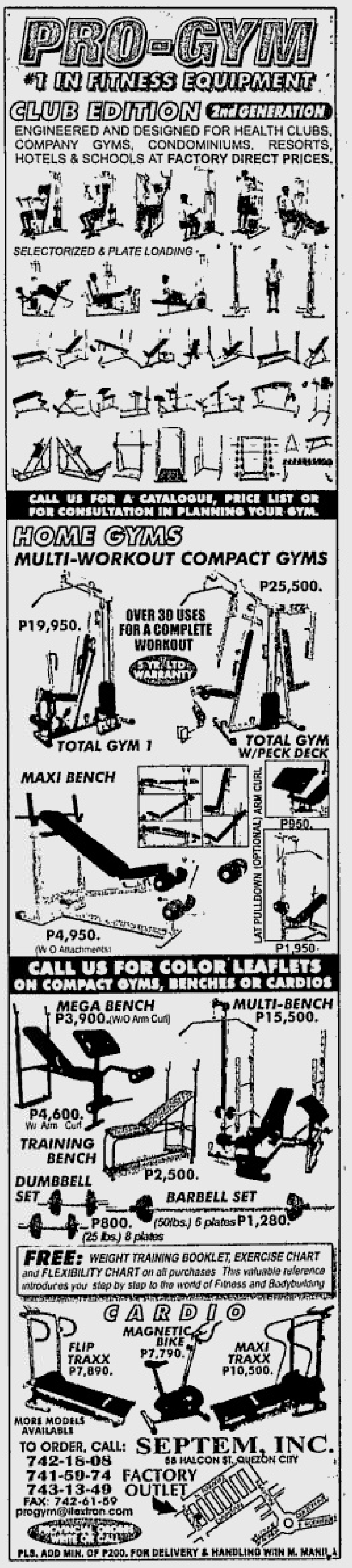
Antinarcotics operatives then found a big plastic sachet inside Ramos' belt bag. The sachet was later determined to have contained shabu, Abaring testified.

Abaring told the court that Ramos pleaded to him, saying he peddled drugs only because he needed money that day.

In his testimony, Ramos denied the allegations.

He said his colleagues, who were "envious of his lucrative businesses," set him up.

Ramos also claimed before the court that he was sleeping when the search occurred.



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Angelica appeals for help

ANGELICA Mijares is suffering from biliary atresia, a rare and life-threatening liver disease. She needs a liver transplant soon to save her.

Her parents, Rommel and Melanie, are appealing for financial assistance from kind donors. They need to raise at least P3 million to enable 15-month-old Angelica to undergo such an operation.

Donations can be sent to the Mijares' home at Phase IV-A, Block 2, Lot 19, Pacita Complex, San Pedro, Laguna. Or you can deposit donations directly at account no. 1027-04725-1 RCBC Savings Bank.

You can call them at telephone numbers 808-1358, 0919 8442618, or 0927-2593204. Or you may call LIFT-B.A.B.I.E.S. Foundation, which is helping the family raise funds for the operation, at 824-4621 or 0918 9263237.

Events Plus!

SUPERMOM FAIR
Department of Health officials and sponsors of the Supermom Fair 2003 are set to hold a series of seminars on healthy lifestyle for homemakers. In photo are DOH-NCR Director Dr. George Bayuga, health officials and representatives of the Century Pacific Corp., Southeast Asia Foods, New Zealand Milk and Bayview Hotel in Manila, where the agreement signing took place.

Gutierrez-Pigao; 67

PRISCILLA Gutierrez-Pigao, a long-time teacher at the Don Bosco Technical College in Mandaluyong City, died Monday at the World City Medical Center in Quezon City. She was 67 years old.

Aside from Don Bosco Mandaluyong, Pigao also worked at the Don Bosco-Papua New Guinea. She was from Kapookan, Leyte.

Her remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial chapel in Guadalupe. Cremation will be on Sunday.

No Sunday runs for Megatren starting Sept. 21

STARTING this Sunday, Sept. 21, and the next 11 Sundays, the Megatren will not have service runs.

Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) Administrator Teddy Cruz Jr. said the suspension of the Sunday operations would enable them to open the entire LRT 2 system from Santolan in Pasig City to C.M. Recto in Manila by the second quarter of next year.

"We have to stop the operations on Sundays until Nov. 30 to speed up the remaining work on Phase 1 (Santolan to Cubao) as well as… to finish the integration work linking the four operational stations to the remaining seven stations covering Phase 2 of the Purple Line," he said.

"Right now, the remaining work is being done during the weekdays, thus affecting the operations of the system. But starting this week, work will only be done on Sundays," Cruz added.

The seven other stations that run the stretch of Quezon City, San Juan, and Manila are Betty Go-Belmonte, Gilmore, J. Ruiz, V. Mapa, Pureza, Legarda, and Recto.

The Recto station on the southern end connects to the Doroteo Jose station of LRT 1 which runs from Monumento in Caloocan City to Baclaran in Parañaque City.

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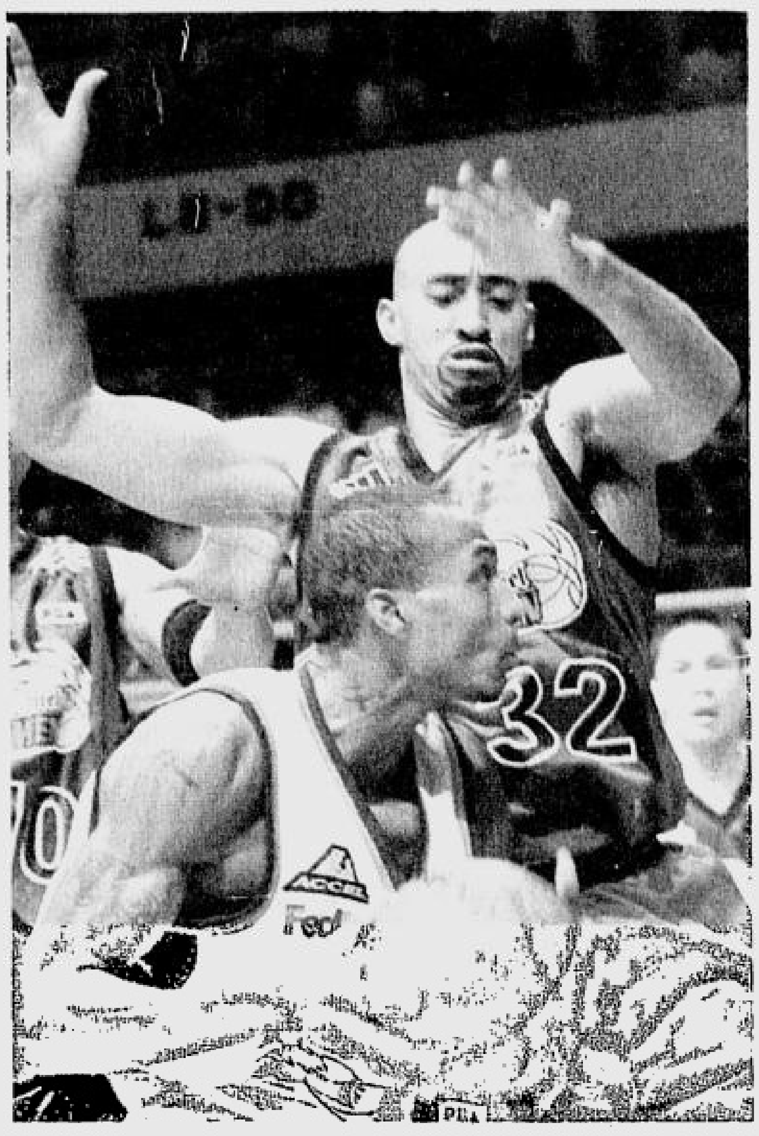
SAN MIGUEL Beer's Shea Seals (32), seen here defending against Terrence Shannon of FedEx, is not homeward-bound, after all. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

SMB re-signs Seals; Aces tap new import

GAMES TODAY *(Philsports)*
5 p.m.—Purefoods vs Alaska
7:30 p.m.—Coke vs San Miguel

STANDINGS	W	L
Group A		
SLR	2	1
FedEx	2	2
Purefoods	0	2
SMB	0	3
Alaska	0	3
Group B		
Coke	3	0
Talk 'N Text	3	1
Ginebra	3	1
Red Bull	2	2
Shell	1	2

WINLESS Alaska turns to a new import and San Miguel Beer goes back to its original choice in a bid to get out of the rut when they face separate rivals today in the Samsung-PBA Reinforced Conference at the Philsports arena.

The Aces try their luck with *balik*-import Isaac Fontaine when they meet the similarly winless Purefoods Hotdogs at 5 p.m.

The Beermen, who have re-signed Shea Seals to take the place of Eric Dailey, face the unbeaten Coca-Cola Tigers in the nightcap at 7:30 p.m.

Fontaine last played here three years ago for Sta. Lucia. The 6-foot-2 replacement for Chris Carrawell is expected to provide extra spark to an Alaska squad trying to avoid a fourth straight loss.

Purefoods, winless in two games, will stick it out with Harold Arceneaux, even though he was ineffective when the Hotdogs fell to the Tigers (97-87) and the Ginebra Gin Kings (96-88).

The Beermen are actually reactivating Seals, who has been bothered by a sprained ankle. But even if he's fit, he would need all the help from his teammates to carry SMB past Coke.

With Artemus McClary proving unstoppable, Coca-Cola breezed past Purefoods (97-87), Alaska (103-82) and Shell (103-96).

McClary, who used to play for Talk 'N Text, dished out a triple-double performance against the Turbochargers last Sept. 12. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Singh captures Deere, takes money lead /A28

- Stags, Knights title series on /A26

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA Summer League—Wizards vs Celtics; 11 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—Washington starts the post-Jordan era as they go up against Boston in this off-season encounter.

2003 Tournament of the Americas; 5 p.m. (r); Solar Sports—Take another look at how the Americans made minced meat of the Virgin Islands.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Caguioa plays Calaguio in 1-on-1

TWO top scorers go head-to-head today when the PBA King of the Court One-on-One tournament opens play in the Governor's division at the Philsports Arena.

Barangay Ginebra's Mark Caguioa and Formula Shell gunner Chris Calaguio try to move to the next round of the bracket for players under 6 feet 4 in this two-division side-event to be played in between the day's twinbill.

Calaguio, now among the hot-shooting options at Shell, will be out to mirror the success of teammate Anthony de la Cruz, who beat Coca-Cola's Rafi Reavis, 24-3, Sunday in the opener of the Commissioner's division for players 6-4 and over.

But Calaguio is expected to have his hands full against the shifty Caguioa, who is tipped to do well in the division that also has Gherome Ejercito of FedEx, Francis Adriano of Sta. Lucia, Brandon Cablay of Alaska, Joey Mente of San Miguel Beer, Rey Evangelista of Purefoods, Jeffrey Cariaso of Coke, Jimmy Alapag of Talk 'N Text and reigning MVP Willie Miller of Red Bull Barako.

The three semifinalists in both divisions see action in round-robin matches, with the top two getting the chance to duel for the P150,000 top spot.

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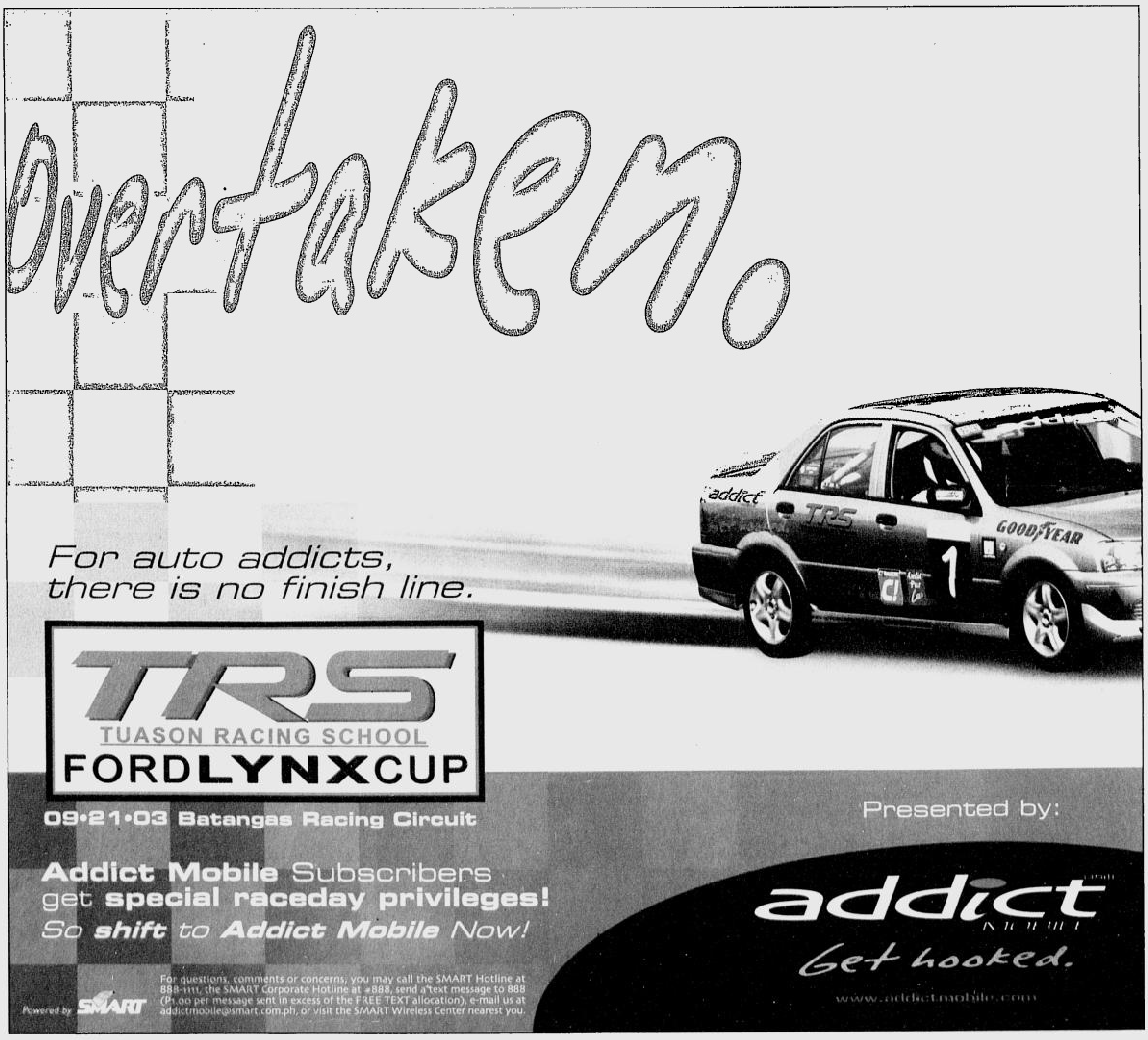
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RP medal hope rests in long jump

By Marc Anthony Reyes

15th Asian Athletics Championships

THERE'S one event in the Asian Amateur Athletics championships where the Philippines stands a big chance of landing a medal—the women's long jump.

And the host country has two stalwarts in the event—Lerma Bulauitan-Gabito and Maristella Torres, who have already proven their worth in the same Asian championship last year as well as the Asian Grand Prix this year.

Gabito and Torres captured the silver and bronze medals, respectively, in last year's Asian championships held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

After being relegated to two silver medals in the Grand Prix this year, Gabito snared the gold when the Manila leg was held in June at the Rizal Memorial stadium, beating Kazakhstan's Yelena Kochsheyeva. Torres earlier placed second in the Indian leg. Before coming to Manila, the blonde and slender Kochsheyeva had won the gold in the earlier Grand Prix legs held in Thailand, India and Sri Lanka. She also prevailed in the Asian championship last year.

"She's very strong but in the past three legs (of the Grand Prix) we have seen that she is beatable," said the 28-year-old Bulauitan-Gabito of Kochsheyeva. "I just hope that we could take the gold in front of our countrymen."

Manila's hot weather is a factor favoring the locals since the Kazakh performs very well in cold conditions.

Gabito noted that after doing 6.62 meters in Hyderabad, India in the Asian GP, Kochsheyeva could only manage 6.36 the following week under the torrid Colombo sun.

SPORTSWATCH

Paragua posts 4th win in a row

FILIPINO Mark Paragua defeated fellow IM Luis Manuel Perez Rodriguez of Cuba Monday night to share the lead with two others after the fourth round of the VII Open International De Ajedrez Parla 2003 In Madrid, Spain. Earlier, the 19-year-old Paragua beat Fermin Serrano Pozo of Spain, Marcelo Orfali of Italy and Martin Matina Yadarola of Argentina, respectively, for a perfect score of four points. In round 5 on Tuesday, Paragua will handle black against co-leader IM Slobodan Kovacevic of Yugoslavia. IM Yuri Gonzales of Cuba also has four points.

With a report from NM Marlon Bernardino

NBA top rookie on Solar

NBA fans can get their first look at the 2003 top rookie pick LeBron James on Thursday when the Cleveland Cavaliers face the Atlanta Hawks in NBA summer league action. The game will be televised at 11 a.m. on Solar Sports, with a replay at 8 p.m. The most heralded American high school player of a generation, the 18-year-old 6-foot-8 James is considered a "can't-miss" prospect with the skills of a guard, the body of a forward and the potential of a superstar.

Filipino cue stars advance

CALIFORNIA-BASED Filipino Santos Sambajon and Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat defeated their respective rivals Monday in the opening round of the US Open 9-ball championships in Chesapeake, Virginia. The 43-year-old Sambajon, who finished ninth in the same tournament last year, beat American Timmy Hall, 11-3, to set up a match against another American, Rick Zeiner. Luat clobbered Duke Weaver, 11-3, and arranged a second-round battle with Hall-of-Famer Efren "Bata" Reyes, who got a bye in the 1st round.

With a report from NM Marlon Bernardino

ZSSAT booters triumph

PAGADIAN CITY—Zamboanga del Sur School of Arts and Trade (ZSSAT) dropped its final match to San Carlos National High, 2-3, but still emerged as provincial Coke Go-for-Goal under-16 football champion via tiebreak. Both the ZSSAT and Zambo del Sur NHS-Sta. Lucia Annex squads finished with identical 3-1 win-loss records and nine points, but ZSSAT prevailed due to a higher goal difference based on goals for and against. The ZSSAT boys ended with plus 8 against ZSNHS-Sta. Lucia's 5 and Holy Child Academy, 4-1, before losing by a hairline to San Carlos NHS.

La Sallians in double victory

COACHES Hans Smit (De La Salle University) and Tony Lopez (De La Salle-Zobel) must be like proud fathers with the way their squads opened their campaign in the 2003 Metro Manila Girls Football Association season recently. In the 17-and-Under division, DLSZ got goals from Abby Go. Sam Nierras, Pam Bravo, Gold Jacinto (2) and Marta Uriarte (4) to walk over St. Benedict, 9-0. In the Open division, DLSU beat St. Benedict's, 16-0, and got its share from Inna Alejandro (4), Stef Pheasant (4), Marielle Benitez (2), Patty Silva (2), Sugar Perez (2) and Andrea Sevilla (2). Both matches were held at the Zobel pitch in Ayala Alabang.

Mini Euro at Nomads

THE NOMADS Sports Club will host the Mini European Championships—a six-a-side football tournament were each team is predominantly made up of players from the country it represents—on Sunday. Participating squads from England, France, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Denmark, Germany, Spain and Italy have registered. John Milne of Brent International School, an ex-professional footballer at Aberdeen in the Scottish Premier League, is the tournament director. Log in to www.nomadsportsclub.com for details.

Globe Supercup in October

SANTI Elizaldo, president of the NCR Football Association, announced yesterday that the 2003 Globe Supercup football tournament will kick off on Oct. 18. Interested clubs may call Hans Smit, this season's tournament commissioner. The Globe Supercup will only accept 24 teams this year and already 20 have confirmed. The next organizational meeting is on Sept. 29, 5:30 p.m. at the Manila Club.

De La Hoya-Mosley replay up

IN VIEW of the raging controversy over the decision in last Sunday's WBC/WBA Super Welterweight Championship fight between Oscar De La Hoya and Sugar Shane Mosley and numerous requests from boxing fans, Viva Sports will replay the fight including the in-between rounds discussions in the fighter's corners and post-fight interviews at 12 noon on Sunday over RPN 9.

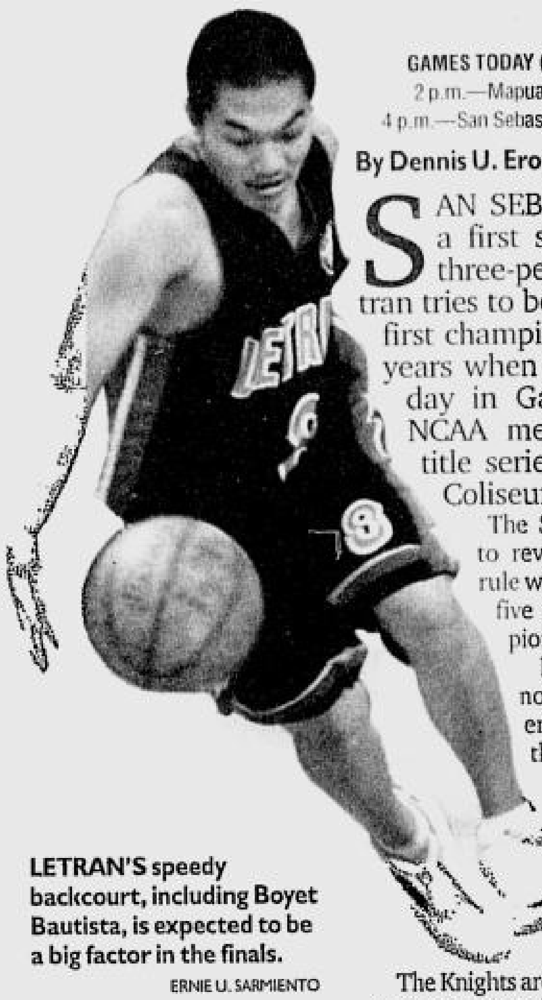
Sagupaan in Pampanga

CENTRAL Luzon cockers are expected to come in droves for the 3rd Annual Sagupaan 5-Stag Derby today at the Pampanga Coliseum beginning 5 p.m. The 62-fight program will be sponsored by Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Mite-Free Shampoo and Sagupaan B-50 Forten. Sabong idol Patrick Antonio, derby host, has invited the big guns of Metro Manila like Gerry Ramos, Biboy Enriquez, Gov. Ito Ynares, Boy de Roca, Mayor Nene Aguilar, Raymond Velayo, Jet Fernando, Eric de la Rosa, Tony Lasala, Blandy Tolentino, Sonny Lagon and Joey de los Santos.

NCA championship round

TODAY'S NCA 7-Stag Derby championship round will feature 60 encounters at the Araneta Coliseum starting at 5 p.m. Leading the pack are 3-pointers Patrick Antonio (Sagupaan Hammer II SP), Rep. Rudy Albano (Mulawin A Jimafer), Mat Bitanga (Golden Circle II) and John Capinpin (BJ Cap JCD Kings Farm). Meanwhile, preparations are also underway for the NCA's Grand Championship 8-Stag Derby on Nov. 10, 12 and 14. Interested parties may contact 911-3101 or 911-2928.

Stags-Knights title series on



LETRAN'S speedy backcourt, including Boyet Bautista, is expected to be a big factor in the finals. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

GAMES TODAY (*Rizal Coliseum*)
2 p.m.—Mapua vs Letran (Jrs)
4 p.m.—San Sebastian vs Letran (Srs)

By Dennis U. Eroa

SAN SEBASTIAN takes a first step toward a three-peat while Letran tries to beat a path to a first championship in four years when they clash today in Game 1 of the NCAA men's basketball title series at the Rizal Coliseum.

The Stags are gunning to revive their dynastic rule when they strung up five consecutive championships from 1993.

But the Knights are no pushovers considering their form in the eliminations.

"Letran is also very strong. We can't afford to be complacent," said SSC coach Turo Valenzona.

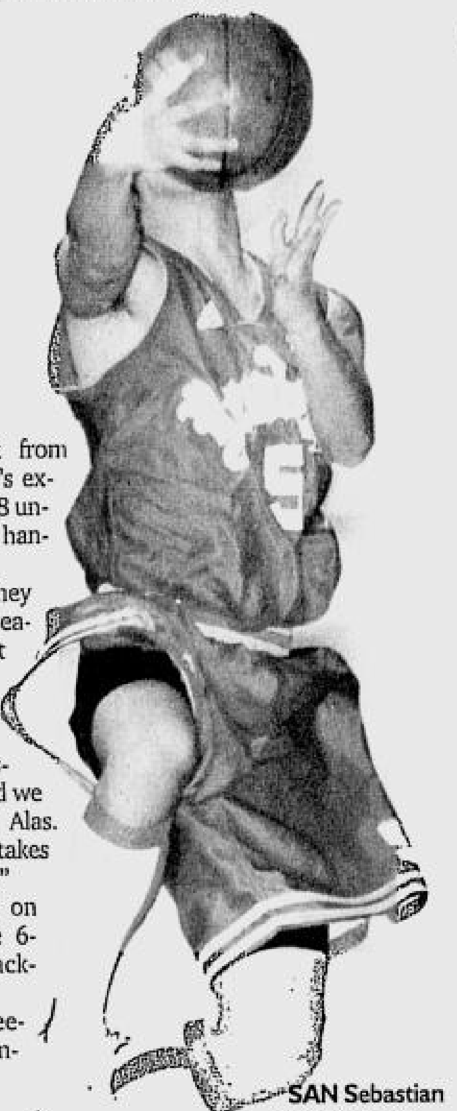
The Knights are certainly not awed by the Stags' storied past, having also won the title back-to-back from 1998. In fact, it was at SSC's expense that Letran won in 1998 under Louie Alas, who is again handling the Knights.

The odds are even as they split their two games this season. The Knights won the first (73-64) last July 14, while the Stags took the second (63-61) last Aug. 29.

"We know how San Sebastian performs in the finals and we respect its tradition," said Alas. "But I think we have what it takes to capture the championship."

San Sebastian will rely on slotman Clark Moore, the 6-foot-7 holdover from the back-to-back champion teams.

Letran boasts of a three-man wrecking crew composed of Frederick Rodriguez, Kris Reyes and rookie Jonathan Piñera.



SAN Sebastian will rely heavily on its shock troops, like Nicole Uy. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Qatar, Taiwan cagers rout Nat'l Open foes

CEBU CITY—Qatar-Ricor Mills and Chinese Taipei-Plantation Bay crushed their respective rivals Monday to remain in the title hunt in the 2003 Trust Classic National Open basketball championship at the New Cebu City Coliseum here.

The Qataris limited RP-Air21 to 19 points in the first half en route to a 96-56 win, while the Taiwanese trounced NBL-Burlington, 92-82.

With their third straight victory, the Qataris kept solo leadership in the tourney sponsored by Trust Classic, Waterfront Hotel-Cebu City, Cebu Visitors and Convention Bureau, Plantation Bay, Air21, Spring Cooking Oil, Panasonic, Gatorade, Accel, Sunkist, Healthy Options, Burlington, Hotel de Mercedes, Air Philippines, The Freeman, DSZR Sports Radio 918 Khz, Nature's Spring Drinking Water, Ricor Mills, Baker's Fair and Molten Basketball.

The Qataris, Taiwanese and M. Lhuilier Kwarta-Padala Cebu remain as the only teams with the chance of winning the crown.

Scores:

First Game

QATAR (96)—Mahmoud 18, Abdi 17, Se. Abdulla 15, Bsher 14, Ali 10, Ismail 8, Nasr 3, Sa. Abdulla 3, Kuwari 2, Mohammed 2, Adel 2, Daoud 2.

RP-AIR 21 (56)—Te 22, Gabica 9, Borboran 7, Santos 6, Sumalinog 2, Ilad 2, Regala 2, Pacurib 2, Evangelista 2, Baracael 2, Reroma 0, Apat 0, Buen 0, Chua 0, Olivares 0

Quarterscores: 35-11, 60-19, 76-43, 96-56

Second Game

CT-PLANTATION BAY (92)—Chen 15, Tien 15, Wu CW 12, Lin 9, Chih CY 8, Ho 8, Wu 6, Yang YM 6, Tang TY Cheh 4, Lee 4, Tseng 0.

NBL (82)—Menor 18, Habelito 12, Robillos 11, Macaraig 9, Manuel 6, Reyes 6, Alberto 5, Bernardino 4, Sta. Maria 2, Dals 0.

Quarterscores: 17-9, 45-28, 70-53, 92-82

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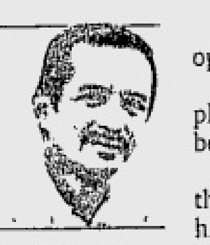
Makati-San Pedro

Golden Boy now crying like poor Erap

BARE EYE



Recah Trinidad

IT'S NOT easy to liken Oscar De La Hoya to Erap Estrada, or vice versa.

They are big public figures that could both be worthy of a future monument.

But De La Hoya is an accomplished boxer, Erap a certified charmer.

They also fight and flourish in two totally distinct arenas.

No comparison, indeed.

But listen. De La Hoya lately has started to sound and cry like Señor Estrada.

The former world junior middleweight boxing king, also known as Golden Boy, has been claiming (quite loudly) that he has been usurped from his world throne.

The celebrated De La Hoya, who has earned millions with his fists and big-draw good looks, cries that he has been illegally dethroned.

Well, Erap maintains he's still legally President of the Republic while pointing to President Macapagal-Arroyo, wife of the embattled, overweight, ever-faithful Jose Miguel Arroyo, as an usurper.

De la Hoya? No, he's not accusing Shane Mosley, who had pummeled and repeatedly jarred him with the bigger, if less numerous, punches Sunday, as the culprit.

The Golden Boy has gone out, all out in fact, against the three fight judges who submitted identical (115-113) cards to declare him the loser.

***

De La Hoya cries that his second straight loss to Mosley was a big scandal.

The Golden Boy, fuming, said he would spend his purse to mount an investigation into what he suspected to be a concerted move to cheat him.

A battery of lawyers would be hired, he vowed.

But it would not be easy to unravel the mess, if there indeed had been one. For a fact, the three judges had De La Hoya leading midway in his title fight against Mosley in Las Vegas.

Many fans had indeed lost their cool, even wanting the judges to be lined up and shot.

Sorry, but the perception that he was robbed was neither overwhelming nor unanimous.

Why? 'Coz there's also this prevailing verdict that Mosley was voted winner and new champ not on the multiplicity of punches. Mosley, as could be gleaned in the fight scores, won because he landed the bigger, more significant punches.

As a whole, and this could never be born of petty mathematical considerations, Mosley emerged the stronger, bigger, better man after the 12-round fight.

***

For the record, the fight, although not exactly dull, was far from being a classic. Friends swore they had to load up on extra strong coffee to stay awake until the final bell.

It's not exactly a shot in the dark what De La Hoya had tried with his call for a thorough probe.

But, boxing not being the holiest sport this side of the red light district, the best that could happen is for authorities to offer De La Hoya, who had also lost in his first clash with Mosley three years ago, a third fight to try and resolve the bitter ring feud.

Shane Mosley had told The New York Times he would welcome a third fight against De La Hoya.

The question is: Will De La Hoya want Mosley again?

Clifton Brown of the NY Times was right: In 24 rounds against Mosley, De La Hoya has never appeared to hurt him, and has difficulty coping with his speed.

Mosley himself has kinder words for the opponent he had officially beaten twice.

"I thought it was a close fight," he explained. "I'd be lying to you if I said I flat-out beat him every round. But I thought I won."

He continued: "I felt I was a lot stronger than him. I think the body shot weakened him. I think my power was the factor. He was afraid to throw his jab, because he knew I was coming with the right to the body."

The catcalls of the legion that sincerely felt De La Hoya had been robbed of his crown were worth listening to, even as the usually unemotional, objective Associated Press called it 116-113 for Mosley.

My friend Pete Aguila, a keen-eyed fight fan, said he also overheard Mosley insinuating De La Hoya lost again because the Golden Boy could not move out of the losing groove, in the same way Alexis Arguello had failed to solve the inborn, offbeat sharpness and speed edge of Aaron Pryor.

Several grizzled experts also pointed to the three successive setbacks suffered by the immortal Flash Elorde against Shigeki Kaneko of Japan as being a result of this unsavory phenomenon locally called "kontra-pelo."

The terrible tune goes that, great as a boxer is, there could be someone out there with a distinct, contrary and effective style that even a legendary pug could never solve.

Back to Clifton Brown: "Many thought the 32-year-old Mosley's best days had passed, but he had a solid game plan against De la Hoya and the skills to execute it. Moving from side to side, counterpunching to the body superbly and throwing the more powerful punches, Mosley kept De la Hoya moving backward most of the time."

Will De la Hoya want Mosley a third time?

Probably, but only if they resort solely to computer scoring which, pardon me, please, is pure and simple amateur stuff.

FedEx stars ready to play for RP team

By Roy Luarca

LINA

SOTTO

R. DE OCAMPO

MENESES

Y. DE OCAMPO

THE BASKETBALL Association of the Philippines need not worry any longer about where to get players for the national team to the 22nd Asian Basketball Championship.

When the availability of key players posed a problem, FedEx chief honcho Bert Lina readily came to the rescue.

"My players are always available for the sake of national interest," said Lina, also the BAP vice president for Luzon and acknowledged godfather of the Philippine Youth team, yesterday.

"I don't care if it is going to affect some of our (PBA) games as long as we could be of help to the country."

The BAP, through secretary general Graham Lim, has submitted to the Philippine Basketball League a 12-man roster intended for the ABC championship slated Sept. 23-Oct. 2 in Harbin, China.

Composing the Cebuana Lhuillier-Philippine Team chosen by the coaching staff headed by Aric del Rosario are Richard Melencio, Celino Cruz, Gary David, Ranidel de Ocampo, Ervin Sotto, Chris Dennis Madrid, Emmerson Oreta, William Joel Wilson, Nelbert Omolon, Recaredo Calimag, Jean Marc Pingris and Bernzon Franco.

With this lineup, the Philippines hopes to improve on its 11th place finish in the 1999 ABC Championship, according to BAP executive vice president Christian Tan and RP assistant manager Danny Francisco during yesterday's PSA Forum at the Manila Pavilion.

But the team's chances hinge on a complete roster and big men De Ocampo and Sotto, and top gunner David may not be around for the biennial tournament.

Lim said Sotto and De Ocampo have yet to be given the green light by their mother school, St. Francis College, which is competing in the Universities and Colleges Athletics Association, while David is committed to play for Montana in a PBL off-season tournament in Davao.

But as things stand, the Express' Yancy de Ocampo, Omanzie Rodriguez, John Ferriols, Vergel Meneses, Renren Ritualo and the rest of the FedEx Express competing in the PBA Reinforced Conference are ready when needed.

The Philippines is bracketed in Group D of the 16-nation meet with Jordan, Qatar and Japan, which the country faces for its first assignment.

With the support of RP team manager Jean Henry Lhuillier, Francisco said they are looking at the long-term goal of winning the ABC title in 2007.

McCann Erickson dominates Super! Muscle Builder

By Dennis U. Eroa

TEAM McCann Erickson powered its way to a comprehensive victory in Day 2 of the Super! Muscle Builder wall-climbing competition at the Play Underground, Power Plant Mall in Rockwell, Makati.

Gail Riofrio, Uyay Orcino, Mike Garcia and Randy Ypon totalled 300 points as they beat the Swatch team led by TV celebrity Miriam Quiambao and basketball hero Vince Hizon.

Swatch finished with 170 points, followed by Ace Saatchi & Saatchi and BBDO with 115 and 110 points, respectively, in the event held as part of seven days of thrill and fun to highlight Super!.

Super! is the latest, colorful addition to the Saturday Entertainment section of the INQUIRER. Headed by the dynamic pair of creative director Tim Yap and contributing editor Pam Pastor, Super! means Style, Urban Living, Pop Culture, Entertainment and Recreation.

Super! is touted to lift the youth's growing sense of individual style and sensibility. It promises to be the collective voice of a generation that seeks to stamp its mark in the modern world.

Smart Zed and L'Oreal ended the contest with 80 points each.

INQUIRER, Inq7, IQ Frnds, Jungolf and Super also saw action in the fun division.

INQUIRER bigwigs, headed by president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, senior vice-president for sales and marketing Renato R. Reinoso, senior vice-president for corporate services David O. Valdes, VP for advertising Felipe Olarte and assistant vice-president for marketing and classified ads Donald Lim graced the event.

Super! treated selected readers and guests to screenings of "Legally Blonde 2" and "2 Fast 2 Furious" at Greenbelt Cinemas during Day One.

Still be to be held are Super! Comedy and Karaoke, Super! Ghetto Fabulous!, Super! X-posed and the launch of Super! headlined by international DJ Danny Howells and Manolet Dario.

Shot in the arm

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

HAS Red Bull Barako finally found the import it badly needs for the PBA Reinforced Conference in Scott Burrell, an eight-year NBA veteran who last played with the Charlotte Hornets two years ago?

"He may not be exceptional, but he looks like the one we really need," said coach Yeng Guiao. "*Matalinong maglaro* (He's an intelligent player) and very coachable."

In his debut last Sunday, Burrell used his vast experience to good advantage by playing a significant role in Red Bull's one-sided 89-74 victory over Sta. Lucia Realty. The win improved Red Bull's record to 2-2 and lifted without question the sagging morale of a team reeling from two straight embarrassing losses.

The 42-year-old Guiao, who piloted the Photokina franchise of low-key sportsman-businessman George Chua to back-to-back Commissioner's Cup championships in 2001 and 2002, said that with Burrell in the team, the local players are now more confident and inspired. A member of the 1998 NBA champion Chicago Bulls, Burrell replaced Ramel Lloyd, who had no NBA experience.

Unlike some showboating imports, Burrell plays serious basketball, a style that sits well with Red Bull management. An all-around player, Burrell can shoot if he wants to, grab the important rebounds and provide the mature leadership to an error-prone team. In his debut, he only scored 19 points, but he was a vital cog in Red Bull's masterful victory over Sta. Lucia by hauling down 11 rebounds, getting six steals, issuing four assists and pulling off a block in 38 minutes of quality play, aside from limiting his Sta. Lucia counterpart Nate James to just six points in the first half and four in the third quarter.

On Sunday, Sept. 21, Burrell gets the chance to prove his true worth again when Red Bull battles faltering Alaska Milk, coached by multi-titled Tim Cone and led by import Chris Carrawel.

***

'LAST HAZM' SEEKS NO. 2. In what is expected to be another most exciting race, never-say-die Last Hazm meets chief rival Don Paolo anew on Sunday at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite in the second leg of the 2003 Philracom Juvenile Colts Stakes.

Owned by much admired businessman Hermie Esguerra, Last Hazm, expertly ridden by jockey Jeffril Zarate, came from behind to post a nail-biting victory over highly favored Don Paolo in the inaugural leg held over 1,450 meters last Aug. 10 at the Santa Ana Park.

"*Matapang na kabayo* (A brave horse)," Esguerra said proudly of the horse bred by Sandy Javier.

Sunday's second leg will cover 1,500 meters, with P600,000 going to the winner. Also on tap on the same day is the Philracom Fillies Stakes race.

***

OLYMPIC ODDS AND ENDS. The women's 100-meter dash final in Barcelona in 1992 is the closest in Olympic women's history, with American Gail Devers nosing out Juliet Cuthbert of Jamaica by .01 seconds. Devers became the third straight Olympic 100m champion to hail from UCLA ... In the 1952 Helsinki Games, the middleweight boxing crown went to a 17-year-old named Floyd Patterson. Four years later, he became the youngest world heavyweight champion in history at age 21 before Mike Tyson bettered that mark... Also in 1952, Team USA collected its third straight men's basketball gold medal, with Clyde Lovellette and Bob Kerland leading the team to an 8-0 record... FAMILY AFFAIR: It was a sort of keeping the family's Olympic Torch burning in the 1996 Atlanta Centennial Games when Andre Agassi of the US tennis team and India's Leander Paes met in the semifinals. Agassi's father Mike was a member of the Iranian Olympic boxing team in 1948 in London while Paes' father Vece was a bronze medal winner of India's field hockey team in the 1972 Games in Munich... The Lausanne-based Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) handles all legal matters, from appeal of drug tests to questions of eligibility for athletes competing in the Olympic Games. The body is independent. "It will be fair, fast and free," says CAS official Gabrielle Kaufmann of Switzerland... Did you know that before athletes competed in the 1996 Atlanta Games, they signed a waiver agreeing to keep any dispute out of national courts?

For inquiries, call fax/phone (044) 933-1214

PBL an 'amateur' league

MALACAÑANG has declared the Philippine Basketball League (PBL) a non-professional league.

In a letter to the PBL, dated Aug. 28 and signed by Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Malacañang stressed that the existence of contracts does not necessarily remove the amateur status of a player.

The Games and Amusement Board, in a resolution issued on Dec. 19, 2000, had concluded that the PBL is a pro league subject to its regulatory and supervisory authority.

However, then commissioner Yeng Guiao insisted that, among others, the PBL is not a pro league as it was established primarily to operate and control an amateur basketball league designed to promote basketball through promising and gifted athletes.

Ali plans 3-nation t'kwondo

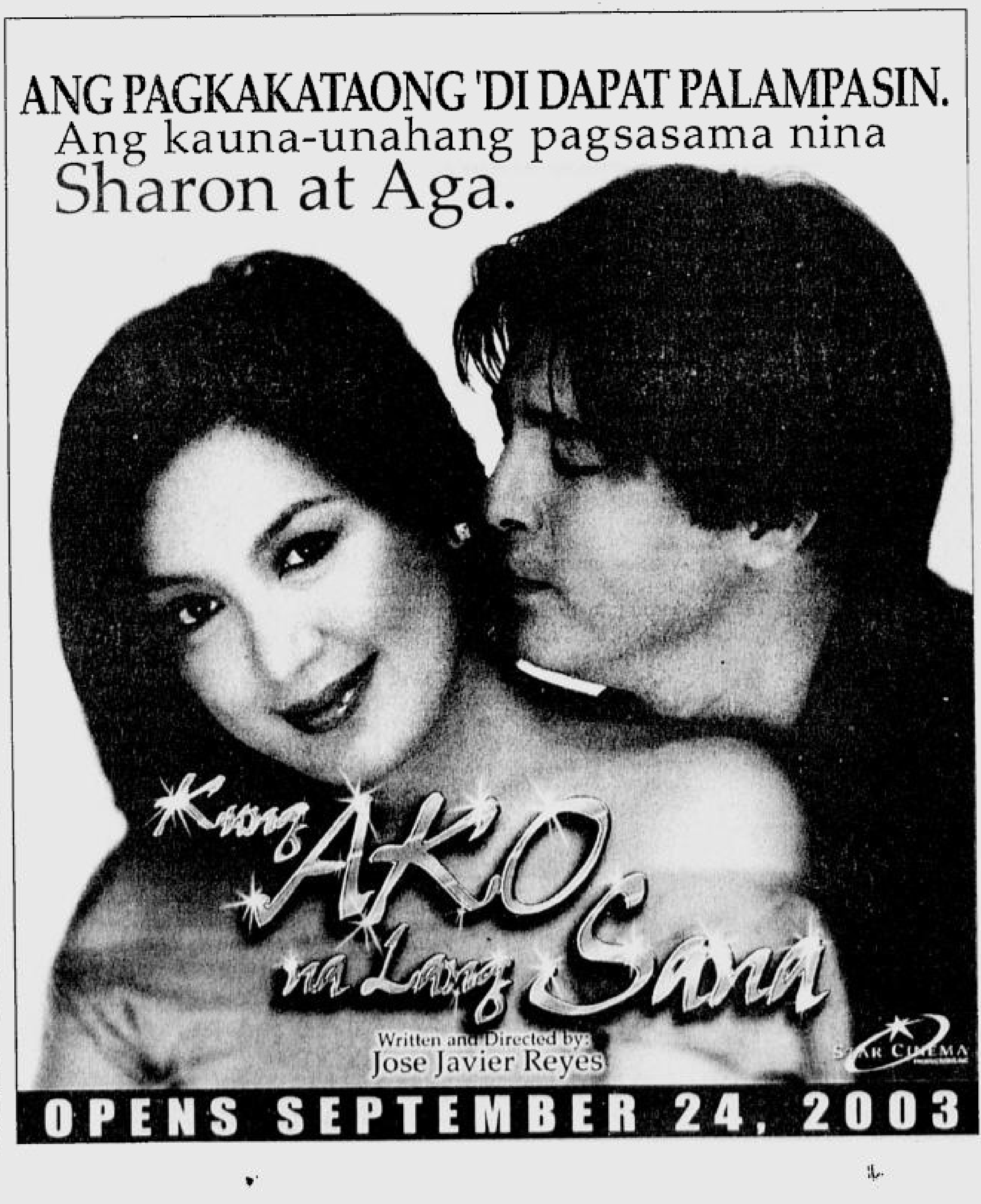
MANILA Sports Council (Masco) chair Arnold "Ali" Atienza heads a team that leaves for Toronto, Canada and Los Angeles, California Thursday to organize the First RP-US-Canada Taekwondo Challenge to be held in Manila this year.

The Tri-Nation Meet, which will showcase the best taekwondo jins from Canada and the US, has its target date set for early part of November and will be staged in either Harrison Plaza or SM Manila.

"The national teams of Canada and the US and our counterparts from Toronto and Los Angeles have expressed their interest in having friendly but challenging competitions with our athletes in Manila, while providing exposure for their athletes, as well as ours," Atienza said.

"We also want to show the ability of the Masco to organize and host such an event at a minimal cost."

Philippine Taekwondo Association vice president Sung Chon Hong has given the Masco the green light to organize the event.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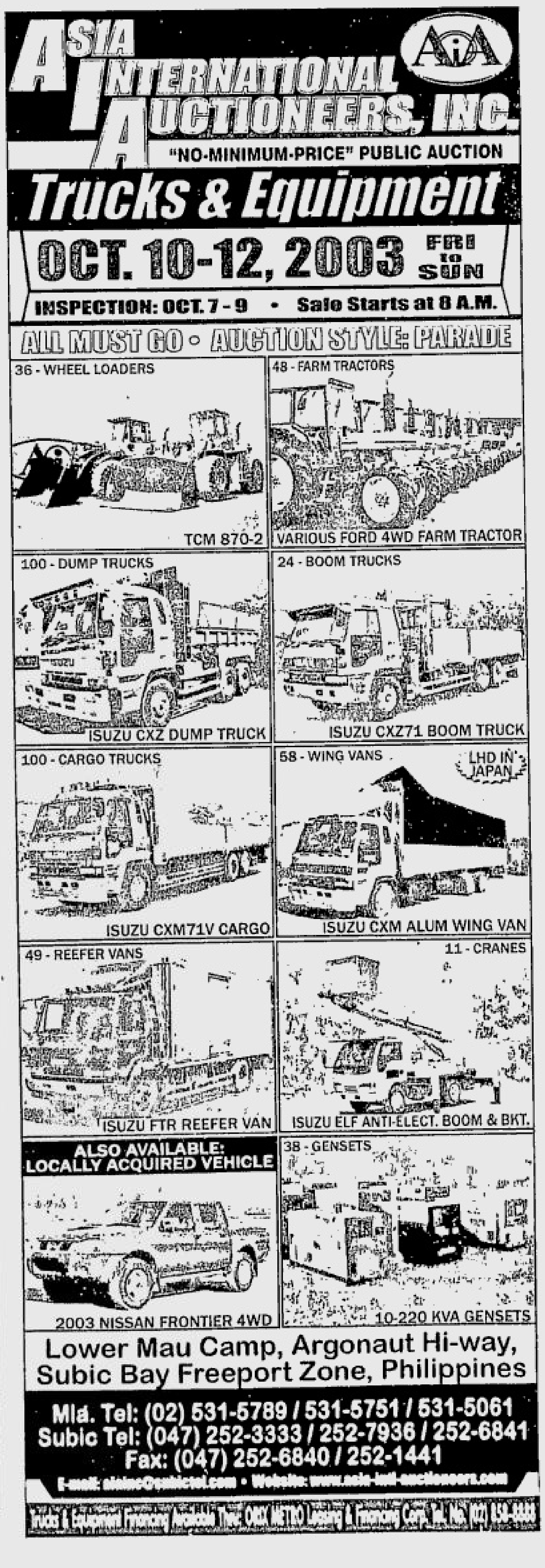
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DE LA HOYA: I was robbed. AP

Judge defends decision on Mosley victory

MCLEAN, Virginia—The judge in the Shane Mosley-Oscar De La Hoya championship fight on Monday defended the decision to score the fight unanimously in favor of Mosley.

Judge Duane Ford told USA Today newspaper that he has no second thoughts despite the opinion of many others, like De la Hoya, who felt he was robbed.

"It doesn't surprise me to have this heat after a fight," said Ford. "A good judge has to be able to take the heat.

"You have to train yourself. Don't read the columns. Don't listen to people. I woke up today knowing I did a good job."

Mosley, who captured De la Hoya's World Boxing Council and World Boxing Association's 154-pound titles, woke up Monday talking about giving De La Hoya a rematch.

There was no repeat suggestion from De la Hoya on Monday about retiring, something he said he would do if he lost the fight.

All three judges scored the 12-round fight 115-113 in favor of Mosley, who landed less punches but impressed Ford with a number of powerful shots.

"At the end of seven rounds De la Hoya seemed to own Mosley. But then things changed and it was kind of like De la Hoya hibernated."

Some of the strongest criticism of the three ringside judges came from De La Hoya's trainer Floyd Mayweather, who said, "These old judges are blind and senile. Clearly Oscar won the fight."

Mosely simply landed the harder and more damaging blows, said Ford.

"If it was an amateur fight, De La Hoya would have won because all the punches are equal," said Ford.

"In pro boxing harder shots are judged differently. A hard punch counts more. Oscar De La Hoya could have been my brother and I would not have favored him any more than I did Mosley." AFP

Singh captures Deere title, takes money lead

SILVIS, Illinois—Vijay Singh played a quick 13 holes and earned a hefty check that moved him closer to one of his career goals: winning the PGA Tour's season money title.

Singh collected $630,000 for his four-shot win at the rain-delayed John Deere Classic on Monday, moving ahead of Davis Love III on this year's tour earnings list.

"My goal is to really be able to win the money list just once before I finish. This will probably be the best opportunity I get," said Singh of Fiji, who now has collected $5.7 million and a career-high three wins this year.

With three more PGA Tour events on his schedule this year, Singh likes his chances.

"If I can win one more time, I think I've got it sealed," said Singh, who also moved past Phil Mickelson for third place on the career money list with nearly $24 million in 11 years on the tour.

Singh closed with a 6-under-par 65 for a total of 16-under 268. He had six birdies in a bogey-free final round that was held over a day after darkness suspended play Sunday night.

Chris Riley (71), J.L. Lewis (71) and Jonathan Byrd (68) shared second at 12-under 272.

Riley said Singh is tough to catch when he has the lead in the final round.

"He's in the Tiger Woods, Davis Love, Mike Weir, their class. I'm trying to get there," said Riley, who now has six top-10 finishes this year.

Byrd said consistency is the key to Singh's game, especially with his short irons.

"He's hitting it (within) 15, 20, 10 feet all day. You do that for enough holes, you're going to make something," Byrd said.

Singh also is being mentioned as player of the year.

"I can control the money list. I cannot control the player of the year," he said.

Singh started play Monday at 12 under, tied with Lewis, who posted his lone career win at the Deere Classic in 1999.

The pair resumed their final round Monday on No. 6, and Singh began to pull away after he birdied No. 8 and Lewis followed with a bogey on No. 9.

Lewis, who used only 50 putts when he shot consecutive 6-under 65s in the first two rounds, struggled on the green over the weekend.

"I didn't feel nervous but I played like I was so I must have been," said Lewis, who shot even par the last two rounds. AP

Young golf phenom shines

BOISE, Idaho—Michelle Wie, golf's teenage phenom, held her own in a foursome that included LPGA Hall of Famer Nancy Lopez, two-time major champion John Daly and PGA Tour member Hank Kuehne.

The team of Lopez and Kuehne won the nine-hole skins event at Hillcrest Country Club, but only Kuehne had a better score than the 13-year-old from Honolulu in the Kraft/Nabisco Shoot-out, a $25,000 skins game Monday benefiting the golf programs at Boise State and the University of Idaho.

Wie had three straight birdies near the end of the round and finished at 1-under 34, one stroke behind Kuehne. Lopez and Daly both had 36s.

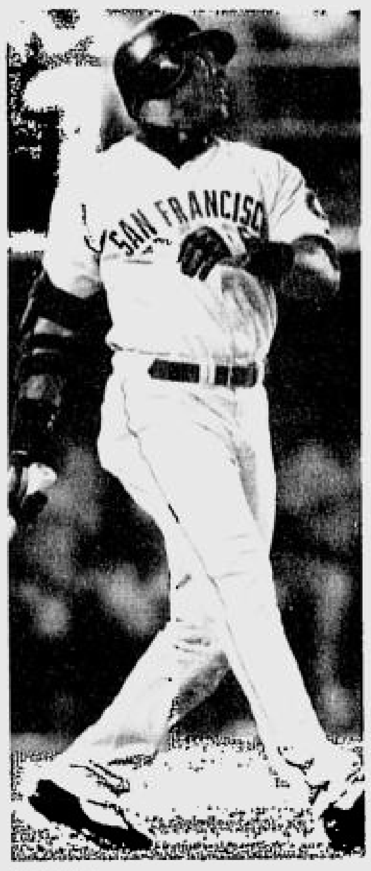
On Thursday, at the same course, Wie will become the first female junior amateur to compete in a PGA Tour-sanctioned tournament by teeing it up in the Albertsons Boise Open on the Nationwide Tour.

"This gives me a lot of confidence, playing with them," Wie said. AP

SINGH leans over as his birdie putt on the 17th hole rolls in. AP

GIANT MILESTONE

Bonds moves past Ruth in walks list



BONDS AFP

SAN FRANCISCO, California—On a night when Barry Bonds drew a milestone walk, it was his second base on balls that keyed a late rally.

Bonds' eighth-inning walk was part of a three-run outburst as the San Francisco Giants posted an 8-7 victory over the San Diego Padres.

Bonds, who also hit his 655th career homer, moved into second place on the all-time walks list with a sixth-inning free pass—his 2,063rd.

He moved past Babe Ruth and trails only Rickey Henderson, who has 2,190.

San Diego held a 7-5 lead entering the bottom of the eighth inning when J.T. Snow greeted reliever Kevin Walker by drawing a walk.

Former Giant Jay Witasick replaced Walker and struck out Rich Aurilia before walking Bonds.

Edgardo Alfonzo and Benito Santiago followed with RBI singles to tie the game.

Marquis Grissom flied out, but right fielder Gary Matthews Jr. made a mental mistake on the play. Matthews started jogging off the field, thinking it was the third out and pinch runner Pedro Feliz took third.

That proved costly when Witasick (3-5) uncorked a wild pitch that allowed Feliz to score the go-ahead run.

In Montreal, Robert Fick hit his first home run in six weeks as the Atlanta Braves reduced their magic number for clinching a record 12th straight division title to three with a 10-6 victory over the Montreal Expos.

Horacio Ramirez (11-4) won his third straight decision for Atlanta, which got its major league-leading 94th win and moved 10 games ahead of idle Florida in the National League East. AFP

Navy, UST tablenet entries whip rivals

KIRBY Colis of Navy and Julius Esposo of UST overwhelmed their respective rivals yesterday at the start of the "Battle of Champions" of the first LG Table Tennis age-group invitational championships at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati.

Colis spanked Edward Ramos, 11-5, 11-3, 11-1, while Esposo trampled Angelo Marcelino, 11-6, 11-2, 11-6, to lead the round-of-32 winners among the members of the men's national team.

Earlier, Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit, LG president Jeff Heong, LG vice president for marketing Sunny Eum, LG marketing manager JB Bandol, Rep. Gerry Salipudin, and Tatap (Table Tennis Association of the Philippines) president Vic Valbuena graced the opening of the event.

Also prevailing in this event were Ronaldo Santos, Leonard de Leon and Rudolf Palermo.

Santos outlasted Sherwin Remata of Candelaria, 11-6, 11-4, 9-11, 11-9; De Leon repulsed Gylor Villar, 11-6, 10-12, 11-7, 11-6, while Palermo turned back Percival Elfan, 9-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-7.

In the women's side, fancied Sendrina Balatbat, the 15-year-old top junior player from College of St. Benilde, hurdled Annabel Comenador of PCU, 6-11, 11-4, 11-7, 15-13, to advance to the next round.

Jerly Moreno of Arellano University likewise dropped the first set but swept the next three to beat Katherin Viñas of Batangas, 12-14, 11-9, 11-7, 11-8.

Man arrested over killing of Williams kin

COMPTON, California—A man was arrested in the shooting death of a sister of tennis stars Venus and Serena Williams, and authorities searched for four other possible suspects in the slaying outside a house known to attract gang members.

Aaron Michael Hammer, 24, was booked for investigation of murder late Sunday and jailed without bail. Sheriff's deputies said he had ties to a gang but was not a member.

Yetunde Price, 31, was shot in the chest early Sunday about a mile (kilometer) from the tennis courts where her younger sisters first rose to prominence in this gang- and violence-plagued city outside Los Angeles.

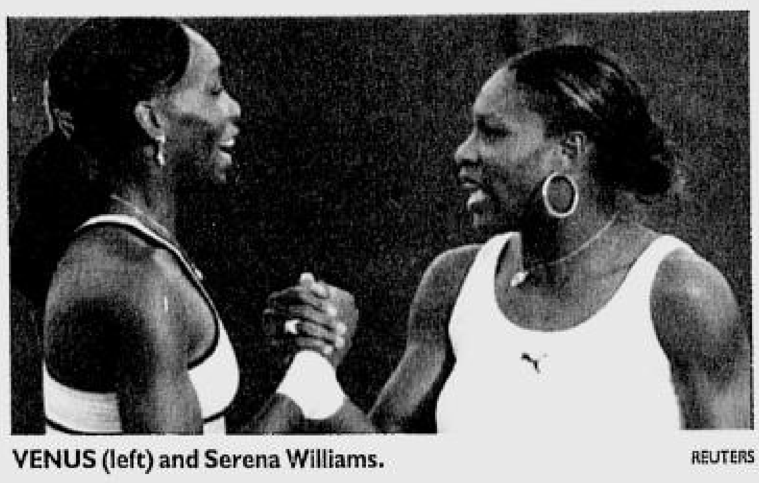
The motive for the slaying remained under investigation.

As many as four other possible suspects were being sought, Deputy Richard Pena said Monday.

Price was killed by a gunman standing in front of a house where gang members have been known to gather and where drugs have been sold in the past, authorities said.

"At this point we just don't know if this is gang or narcotics," said sheriff's Lt. Daniel Rosenberg, a homicide detective. "I can tell you there are certain indications to suggest this location has involved either gangs or drugs. The house was troublesome to both the residents in the community and the deputies in Compton station."

Price, who no longer lived in Compton, was sitting with a man in a sport utility vehicle shortly after midnight when they got into a confrontation with several neighborhood residents, Pena said. Authorities said it was not known whether Price knew her assailant. AP



VENUS (left) and Serena Williams. REUTERS

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Race 4--1. Morena 2. Field Master 3. Velocity 4. Going Free 5. L'Islet Sur Mer

Race 5--1. Pride of Cebu 2. Despedida 3. Regal Reality 4. Standout

Race 6--1. Dulce My Love 2. Golden Prince 3. Patago

Race 7--1. Kumbawa 2. Earth Angel 3. Hurry King 4. Shape of the Wind 5. Maple My Love

Race 8--1. Are You Happy 2. Might and Power 3. High Pocket 4. Dampi/Terrific

Race 9--1. Better King 2. Romario 3. Helosilvergirl 4. Skip Away 5. Top Bullet 6. Nureyev Haress

'Funny' back next month

NEW YORK—Funny Cide is likely to return to the races early next month, although it's doubtful the Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner will make it to the Breeders' Cup on Oct. 25.

"I'd like to get a race for him the first week of October and then maybe the Cigar Mile in November," trainer Barclay Tagg said Monday. Funny Cide finished a dull third in the Haskell Invitational on Aug. 3 in his last start. The 3-year-old gelding was scratched from the Travers Stakes on Aug. 23 because Tagg said the horse wasn't healthy enough to run. AP

Cundiff ties NFL record as Cowboys nip Giants

CUNDIFF celebrates. AP

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey—This could have been one of Bill Parcells' worst losses. Billy Cundiff turned it into one of his biggest wins.

Cundiff, who tied the game at the end of regulation with a 52-yard field goal, tied an NFL record with the game-winner from 25 yards with 5:57 left in overtime to give the Dallas Cowboys a 35-32 victory over the New York Giants.

It was Parcells' first win as Dallas' coach and it came over the team he led to two Super Bowl victories.

The last field goal was Cundiff's seventh of the game to tie the record held by three others and it came after an eight-play, 51-yard drive led by Quincy Carter.

"I feel fortunate to win. I would have been very disappointed to lose," Parcells said. AP

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3 1ST TIME	THX GUARANTEED SEATS HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE 12 30, 3 00, 5 30, 8 00, 10 30	Onstage MARTIN NIEVERA Sep. 19 & 20, 9PM BEAUTY & THE BEAST (THE MUSICAL PLAY) Sept. 18 - 7PM	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 S.W.A.T. 2 00, 4 15, 6 20, 8 45, 11 00	3 BASIC
4 BASIC	4 DADDY DAY CARE		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 2 FAST 2 FURIOUS 12 10, 4 30, 6 50, 9 10, 11 30	4 DADDY DAY CARE
	5 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 BASIC 12 25, 2 35, 4 45, 6 55, 9 05, 11 15	5 2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
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2	BASIC
3	FREDDY VS. JASON
4	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
5	DADDY DAY CARE
6	S.W.A.T.
7	BRAZEN WOMEN
8	LEGALLY BLONDE 2
9	FIRST TIME
10	THE MEDALLION
11	PINAYPIE
12	KALABIT

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	S.W.A.T.
2	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
3	FIRST TIME
4	THE MEDALLION
5	LEGALLY BLONDE 2
6	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
7	BASIC
8	FREDDY VS. JASON

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888

1	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
2	S.W.A.T.
3	FREDDY VS. JASON
4	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
5	DADDY DAY CARE
6	KALABIT
7	THE MEDALLION
8	BASIC
9	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
10	FIRST TIME

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	S.W.A.T.
2	BASIC
3	IN-LAWS
4	TALK TO HER
5	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
6	WWW.XXX.COM
7	KALABIT
8	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	WWW.XXX.COM
2	RESERVED
3	S.W.A.T.
4	INTERSTATE 60
5	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
6	S.W.A.T.
7	RESERVED
8	PINAYPIE

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	SPY KIDS 3-D
2	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
3	S.W.A.T.
4	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
5	BASIC
6	FIRST TIME

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1	FIRST TIME
2	BASIC
3	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
4	FREDDY VS. JASON

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	FREDDY VS. JASON
2	THE MEDALLION
3	FIRST TIME
4	BASIC

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	S.W.A.T.
2	WWW.XXX.COM
3	WAKING UP IN RENO
4	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
5	BASIC
6	S.W.A.T.

SM BICUTAN
776-3055

1	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
2	FIRST TIME
3	BASIC
4	FREDDY VS. JASON

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
858-2884

1	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
2	ASBOOBS
3	LEGALLY BLONDE 2
4	S.W.A.T.

THE PODIUM CINEMA
18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City
633-0976

1 HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
11:00 FS/11:20 MF/1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40/10:35
LFS/11:00 LMF/12:55 END

2 FREDDY VS. JASON
11:40 FS/12:10 MF/2:20/4:30/6:40/8:50/10:30
LFS/11:00 LMF/12:40 END

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1	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE (THX)
2	FREDDY VS. JASON
3	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
4	1ST TIME
5	BASIC
6	THE MEDALLION
7	S.W.A.T.
8	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
9	DADDY DAY CARE
10	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN

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Ermita 526-7185 536-7809 to 12

1	FREDDY VS. JASON
2	THE MEDALLION
3	S.W.A.T.
4	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
5	1ST TIME
6	BASIC
7	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE

Metro East 682-8193/99 682-8280
Marcos hway

1	FREDDY VS. JASON
2	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
3	S.W.A.T.
4	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
5	BASIC
6	THE MEDALLION
7	DADDY DAY CARE
8	1ST TIME

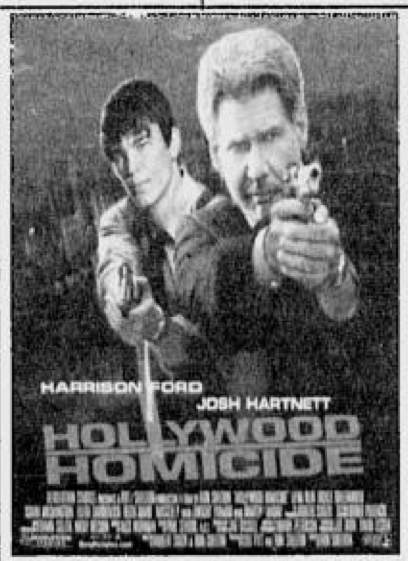
Novaliches 935-3229 / 31

1	THE MEDALLION
2	DADDY DAY CARE
3	FREDDY VS. JASON
4	S.W.A.T.
5	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
6	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
7	BASIC
8	1ST TIME

Star Mills (045)875-1927 (045)961-5270		Imus (046)471-8188 / 975-5855	
1	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS	1	BASIC
2	1ST TIME	2	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
3	INTERSTATE 60	3	1ST TIME
4	SPY KIDS 3D	4	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
5	BASIC	5	FREDDY VS. JASON
6	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE	6	THE MEDALLION

Bacolod (034)441-0458 59		Iloilo (033)336-0070 to 78	
1	S.W.A.T.	1	S.W.A.T.
2	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN	2	INTERSTATE 60
3	INTERSTATE 60	3	WWW.XXX.COM
4	MR. BONES	4	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
5	KEKA	5	TALK TO HER
6	SABIK	6	S.W.A.T.

Sta. Rosa (049)837-0907		Malabon 280 0085-2575	
1	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS	1	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
2	THE MEDALLION	2	BASIC
3	ASBOOBS	3	FREDDY VS. JASON
4	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS	4	1ST TIME
5	1ST TIME		



MTRCB RATING: PG13

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'Little Mermaid' in GenSan to feature stars from Atlanta Ballet

SHOW TIME

ARTISTIC directors Girlie Sta. Maria Royeca and Gina Luz Bringas Suelto of Pointework Dance and Art Center Davao are set to stage "The Little Mermaid" this month in Mindanao.

The debut performances of the classic ballet fairytale will be on Sept. 20-21 in Davao City's The Cap Auditorium, followed by another staging in General Santos City on Sept. 27 at the Lagao Gymnasium. Its final play dates are on Oct. 4-5 in Cagayan de Oro's Capitol University Gymnasium through Ann-G Daque of Cagayan of Grace and Pointe as artistic director.

The show will be choreographed by Gregory Aaron and Nicolas Pacana, the American artistic directors of the Atlanta Festival Ballet of Georgia, USA.

Aaron is the founding artistic director of the Atlanta Festival Ballet. As a performer, Aaron is known as the Nutcracker Prince, having performed the role for over 16 years. He has been responsible for programs that reach out to students and audiences alike across the southeastern United States.

Pacana is an internationally recognized premier danseur and ballet star. A native of Cebu City, Pacana started under Madame Fe Sala Villarica.

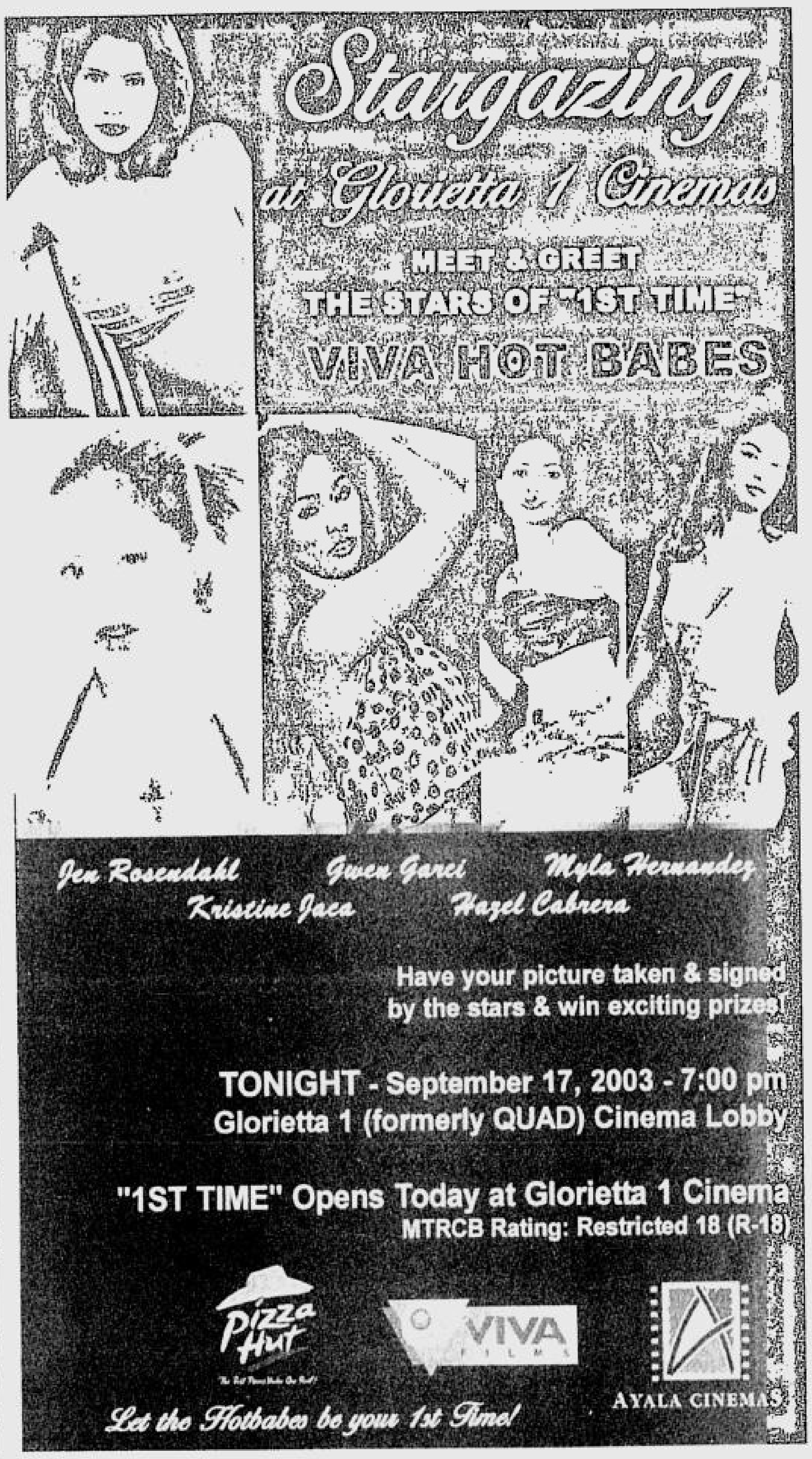
He danced the role of Colas in Fille Malle Garde with the Boston Ballet, performing before 63 million TV viewers in China after replacing the legendary Michael Barishnikov on four hours notice. Partnering with Maniya Barredo, the prima ballerina of the Atlanta Ballet, Pacana was critically acclaimed and earned the tag the "Filipino Barishnikov."

In the forthcoming "The Little Mermaid," Pacana will perform the role of "Prince" and Aaron "King Triton." The classic's music comes from the compilation of Aaron's classical repertoire.

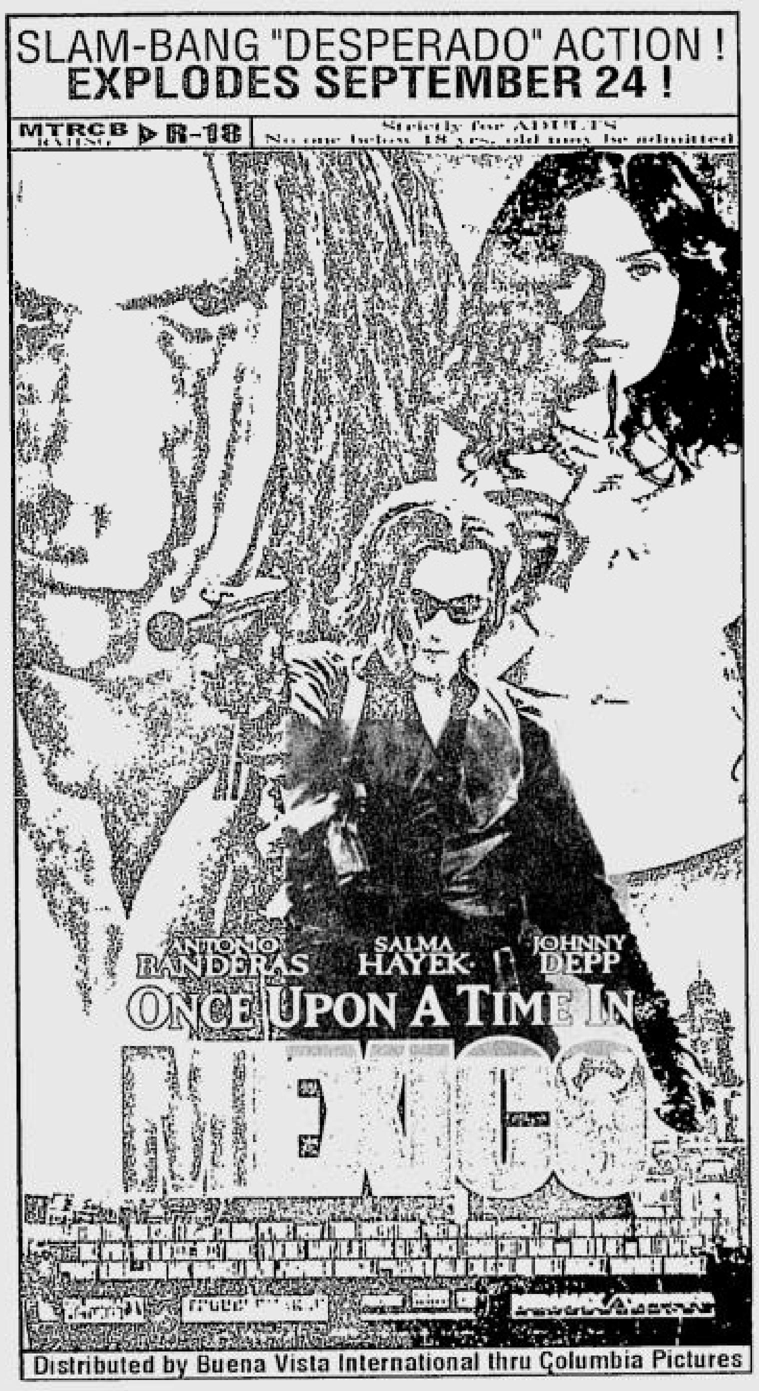
"The beauty of our show is, students of varying ages and many professionals are involved," said Royeca of her General Santos City presentation. "This will be truly a charming ballet for all family members."

GREGORY Aaron (l-r), Girlie Royeca, Nicolas Pacana and Gina Suelto conquer GenSan with 'Little Mermaid.'

Some ghosts will scare you to death!
The award-winning lead star of this film has died recently in the same mysterious and terrifying circumstances suffered by the character he has portrayed... Ikaw, handa ka rin bang saniban para maniwalang totoo ang multo?
THIS IS THE SCARIEST MOVIE YOU'LL EVER SEE ABOUT REAL GHOSTS
TIYAKING MAY MGA KASAMA PARA MAS MALAKAS ANG SIGAWAN NA TANGING PANGONTRA UPANG DI SAPITIN ANG SINAPIT SA TOTOONG BUHAY NG BIDANG ARTISTA.
PG-13
INNER SENSES
異度空間
LESLIE CHEUNG KARENA LAM
Directed by LO CHI-LEUNG
September 24, Wednesday



Stargazing at Glorietta 1 Cinemas
MEET & GREET THE STARS OF "1ST TIME"
VIVA HOT BABES
Jen Rosendahl Gwen Garci Myla Hernandez
Kristine Jaca Hazel Cabrera
Have your picture taken & signed by the stars & win exciting prizes!
TONIGHT - September 17, 2003 - 7:00 pm
Glorietta 1 (formerly QUAD) Cinema Lobby
"1ST TIME" Opens Today at Glorietta 1 Cinema
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R-18)
Pizza Hut VIVA FILMS AYALA CINEMAS
Let the Hotbabes be your 1st Time!



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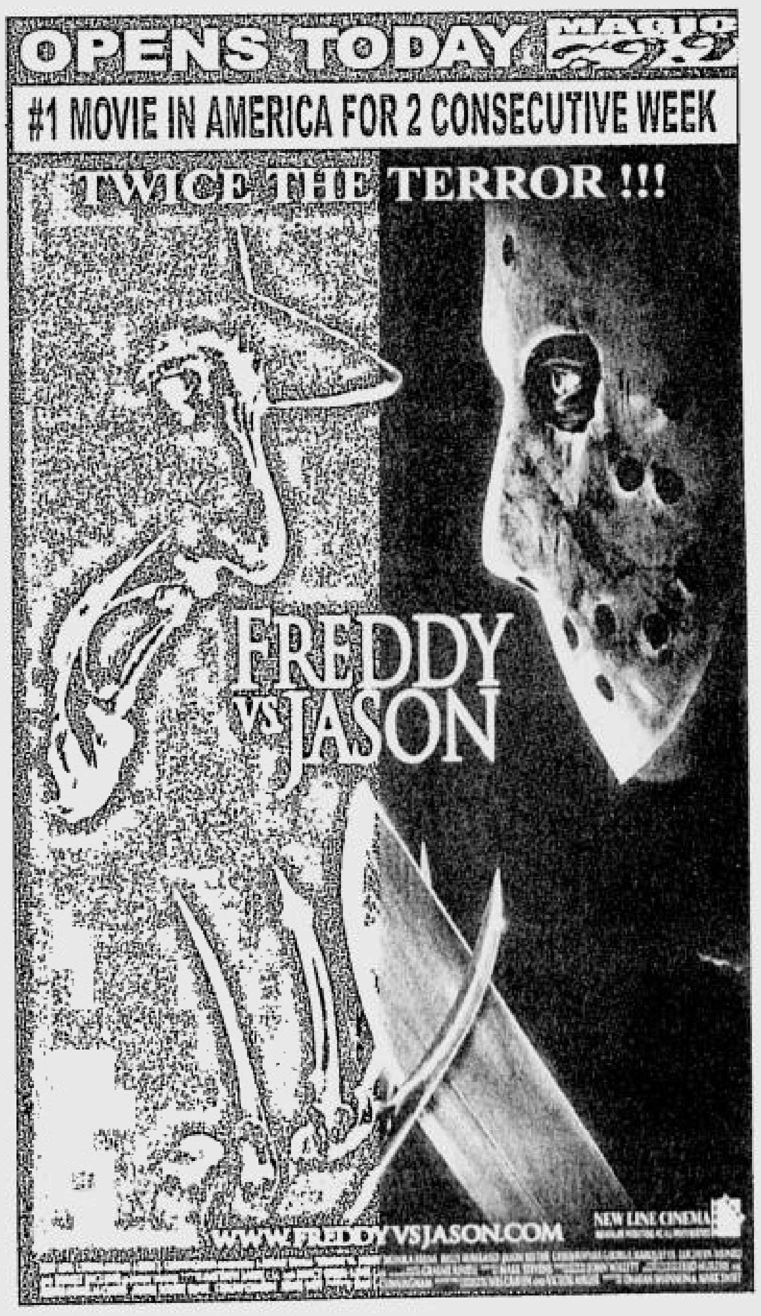
THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAN
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKI
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SI
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATA
CORONET A	FIRST TIM
CORONET B	A MAN APAR
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTI
REMAR	X-MEN
REMAR-2	BOLD STA
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	FIRST TIM
B	KALABIT
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	KALABIT
CINEMA-2	ASBOOBS
CINEMA-3	DADDY DAY CARE
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	S W A T
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	PINAY PIE
CINEMA-6	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
CINEMA-7	BRAZEN WOMEN
CINEMA-8	WWW XXX COM
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	FREDDY VS. JASON
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
CINEMA-12	MEDALLION
CINEMA-14	BASIC
CINEMA 15	FIRST TIME
LORES	
CINEMA 2	[illegible]
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

N CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
CINEMA-1	FIRST TIME
CINEMA-2	ASBOOBS
CINEMA-4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SEIDA

The First Australian Film Festival



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TWICE THE TERROR !!!
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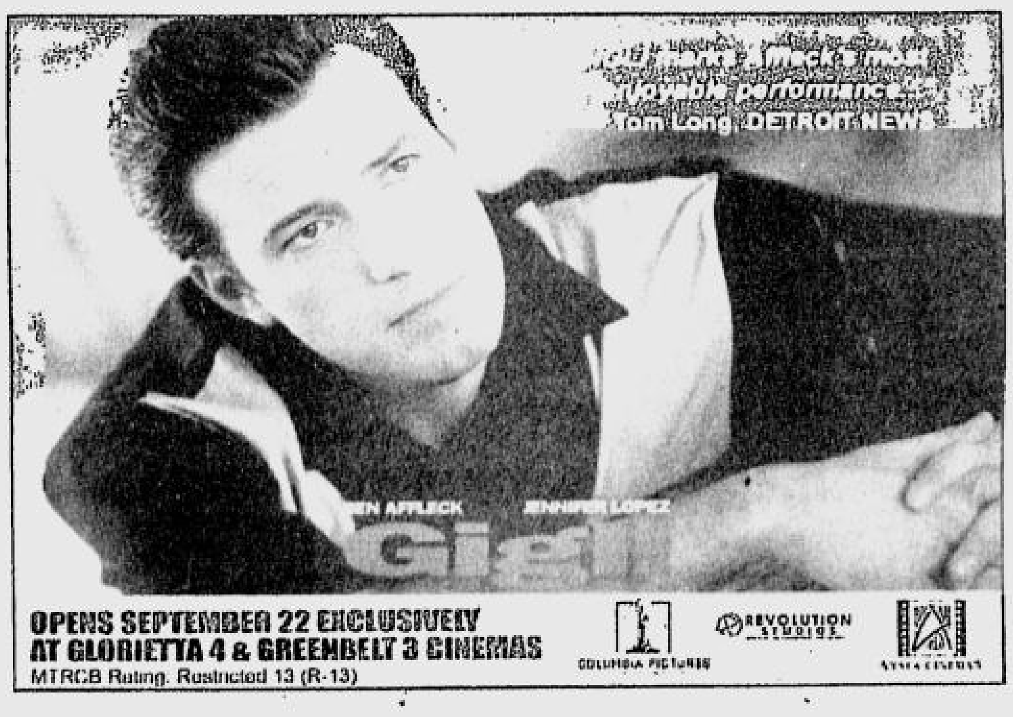

lovable performance
Tom Long DETROIT NEWS
BEN AFFLECK JENNIFER LOPEZ
Gigli
OPENS SEPTEMBER 22 EXCLUSIVELY
AT GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS
MTRCB Rating. Restricted 13 (R-13)
COLUMBIA PICTURES REVOLUTION STUDIOS AYALA CINEMAS

THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
NOW SHOWING
DOLBY DIGITAL
CINEMA 1
HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
11:30, 2:05, 4:40, 7:15, 10:00
PG13
CINEMA 2
FREDDY VS. JASON
11:30, 1:50, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50
R13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

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SEPT 26 BANDS "POSITIVELY LIVE" 7:00PM
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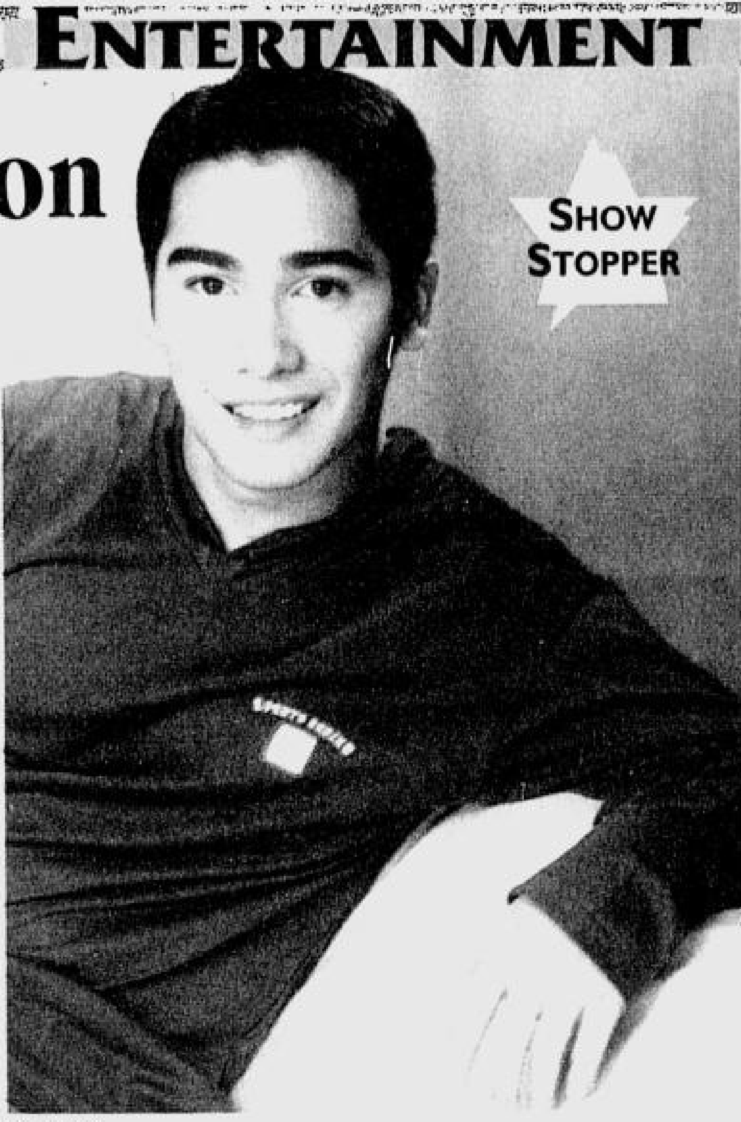
Carlo's passion for pictures

By Alexa H. Bacay



MUÑOZ

CARLO Muñoz's penchant for photography started when he was 12.

Tagged as the "family photographer," he started taking pictures with his first SLR (Single Lens Reflex), given to him as a gift. Now he has a digital camera, and stores his pictures in his computer.

Compared to a digital cam, the manual camera produces more artistic results, according to Carlo. But a digital cam can produce edited or altered results because images can be fixed in the computer, he explains.

Carlo remembers taking a picture of his dog where he had to wait for almost an hour just to catch it smile.

"You'll capture the moment with patience," he says.

Carlo's love for photography now extends to moving film, which he says involves lights and camera work. He plans to study abroad for this, so he can work behind the scenes one day.

Making the mark

Preferring to do character roles over lead parts, Carlo wants to stay for a long time in showbiz.

"If we do not start doing character roles, we will not grow," he says seriously.

But there is a negative side to this career path as Filipino viewers tend to believe that the actor's role is his true personality, Carlo explains.

But the actor says he has no problem with this.

"I'd rather be a character actor and be in the middle of everything," he says.

He feels that an actor who has always played lead roles will have nowhere else to go after reaching the top.

He cites his Dekada '70 role as an example.

"When I did the role of Piolo (Pascual's) traitor friend in 'Dekada', I made a mark (in the film), even if the role was small," he says.

He says he draws his emotion not from experience but from internalizing his role. He says he can play any role but a challenging one for him would be to play a blind person.

Going blind, Carlo says, is one of his greatest fears in life.

Carlo, 25, would have been a Marketing Management graduate by now had he not dropped out of school.

He says he quit school so that his siblings could go to college.

"At the time, there were three of us going to college so we couldn't afford it," he says. "I decided to stop to make way for my siblings."

In an industry where Hollywood films prevail over local movies, Carlo observes that "we only sell what the people are buying. There is no (local) producer who has the guts to try something else."

But the actor plans on staying and of making his mark in the business in which he could indulge his passion for both acting and photography.

Martin Nievera goes Online

SHOW TIME

CONCERT king Martin Nievera conquers cyberspace with his first official website for starsurfs.com, a web portal dedicated to celebrities who have all made a difference in this world through their music.

The website will officially kick off via a grand launch on Sept. 17 at the NBC Tent with its lead celebrity, Martin Nievera, gracing the event.

Log on to martinnievera.com.ph and be transported to the world of Martin Nievera. You can even chat with him online.

Celebrities who will be featured in starsurfs.com are chosen for their moral integrity.

"Celebrities play a big factor in molding our youth, according to Larry Ng, president of starsurfs.com. "And because of our high student-population base, we should be careful in choosing the celebrities we will be featuring. Their image should be worth emulating not only by the younger people but also by everyone else who will be logging on to the website."

Other celebrities who will soon be having their websites in starsurfs.com are Pops Fernandez and Ogie Alcasid.

Ogie Alcasid's album turns gold

HITMAKER Ogie Alcasid's "Mga Kuwento ng Pag-Ibig," has turned gold. The album, under Viva Records' Giant label has already produced two hits, "Huwag Ka Lang Mawawala" and "Magpakailanman," a duet with Regine Velasquez.

Other songs in the 15-track album are "Kayo Na Pala," "Kailangan Kita," "Kahit Na Malayo Ka," "Pangarap Ko Ang Ibigin Ka," "Kailan Ka Magiging Akin," "Di Ko Na Kayang Masaktan," "Pangako Ko Sa 'Yo," "Ikaw Na Nga Kaya," "Lumilipad," "Para Lang Sa 'Yo," "Hindi Magbabago," "Huwag Mong Iwan Ang Puso" and "Panginoon."

Ogie is also busy preparing for his return to the Big Dome with "OA at Fifteen," on Oct. 10.

The concert has a powerhouse line-up of guests like Regine Velasquez, Gary Valenciano, Piolo Pacual, Kyla, Jaya, Janno Gibbs, Michael V, Antonio Aquitana, Wendell Ramos, Francis Magalona, Dingdong Avanzado, Salbakuta, Sarah Geronimo, Manilyn Reynes and Rico J. Puno.

Tickets to "OA at Fifteen" are priced at P1,300 (Patrons A & B), P1100 (Lower Box), P600 (Upper Box A), P300 (Upper Box B) and P150 (General Admission), and are now available at the Araneta Ticketnet (911-5555), SM Ticketnet outlets, and at Viva Concerts (687-5853/687-6181 local 715 or 620/687-1125).

Show biz news and non-news

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHAT passes for entertainment news on TV these days? A casual survey of show biz talk shows reveals the following "major" industry developments:

One has-been actress is mad at another former star.

Many starlets have had their boobs augmented.

This star is having an affair with that other star.

This star is mad at a third star for allegedly spreading the rumor that this star is having an affair with that other star!

A single mother is having an affair with a married man.

A star is mad at a movie scribe for writing bad things about her.

A singer complains about unfavorable reviews about his last production.

A star confesses that she tried to commit suicide several times—but she's OK now.

Stars' outfits at a festival awards night are ridiculed and savaged.

A starlet is feted on her birthday.

Another starlet talks at length about her new sideline, a stall at a mall.

A third starlet plugs her show in a remote province.

With these and other similarly shallow or silly "news" developments, you'd think that the local show biz scene is focused exclusively on lust, controversy, intrigues and sidelines, and that nothing really significant ever happens in the world of entertainment.

Wrong. Show biz "news" coverage just makes it look that way. Fact is, a number of authentically major developments have taken place, but few people care to go into them, because they aren't ratings-friendly."

Some significant show biz developments:

Leadership in major movie organizations has, for the first time, shifted from producers to film workers.

The government appoints good people to head important film organizations, but after appointing them, they are generally given minimal support, so they're left to sink or swim by themselves.

Months before its December playdate, the 2003 Metro Manila Film Festival is experiencing too many compromises and controversies for anybody's good.

Some sexy stars and producers of bold films have decided to stop making sex-oriented films.

New directors are being discovered, but they're being given a bad start because they're being made to do sexy films, as box-office "insurance."

New screenwriters are being exploited and taken advantage of by the TV-movie industry, and are consequently losing heart or burning out fast. So much for the "new blood" that veteran movie people profess they desperately need—and we're back to square one.

Our film classics are deteriorating very quickly due to mishandling, so a film archive, restoration facilities and a movie retrieval system must be put in place at once before we permanently lose more of our film patrimony.

Helgeland, Rodriguez direct new films

DIRECTOR **Brian Helgeland** got a lot of praise for his work on "L. A. Confidential," and now follows up on that landmark movie with "Sin Eater," a riveting religious thriller.

The film stars **Heath Ledger** as a young conflicted priest in New York who helps a female detective (**Shannyn Sossamon**) investigate the case of a French ambassador whose corpse is found, covered with mysterious religious symbols and letters written in Aramaic.

hen his former teacher decodes the signs at the Vatican, it seems this murder may be the work of the last ancient Christian order outside the Catholic Church, called the "Sin Eater," after the person who claims to absolve the guilty of their sins. There's one catch, however: the absolution is fatal.

The film's visuals are unique, partly because the Italian Ministry of Culture gave the production unprecedented access to a number of ancient sites, the catacombs, and historic edifices like the Castello San Angelo.

For his part, maverick director **Robert Rodriguez** completes his Mariachi film series with his latest action epic, "Once Upon a Time in Mexico."

The new adventure is set against a backdrop of revolution and greed. Haunted and scarred by loss, El Mariachi (**Antonio Banderas**) has retreated into a life of isolation. He is forced out of hiding by a corrupt CIA Agent (**Johnny Depp**), who recruits him to sabotage a plot by an evil kinpin of crime (**Willem Dafoe**) to assassinate the president of Mexico. It turns out that El Mariachi has his own reasons for returning—retribution and revenge.

His new cohorts are played by **Salma Hayek**, **Enrique Iglesias** and **Marco Leonardi**.

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

2 FAST 2 FURIOUS R13 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00	FREDDY VS. JASON R13 1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:00	BASIC PG13 1:10, 3:25, 5:40, 7:55, 10:00
MEDALLION PG13 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	S.W.A.T. PG13 12:00, 2:20, 4:45, 7:10, 9:40	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE PG13 12:40, 3:05, 5:30, 7:55, 10:20

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	
Ali 2	2 FAST 2 FURIOUS
Ali 3	1ST TIME
Ali 4	THE MEDALLION
Ali 5	HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
Ali 6	FREDDIE VS. JASON
Ali 7	SWAT

ARANETA COLISEUM

SEPT 17	NCA 7-STAG DERBY
SEPT 18	UAAP: DLSU VS. UE
SEPT 21	UAAP: FINAL FOUR
SEPT 25	UAAP: FINAL FOUR
SEPT 26	JUST ONCE GREATEST HITS REPEAT

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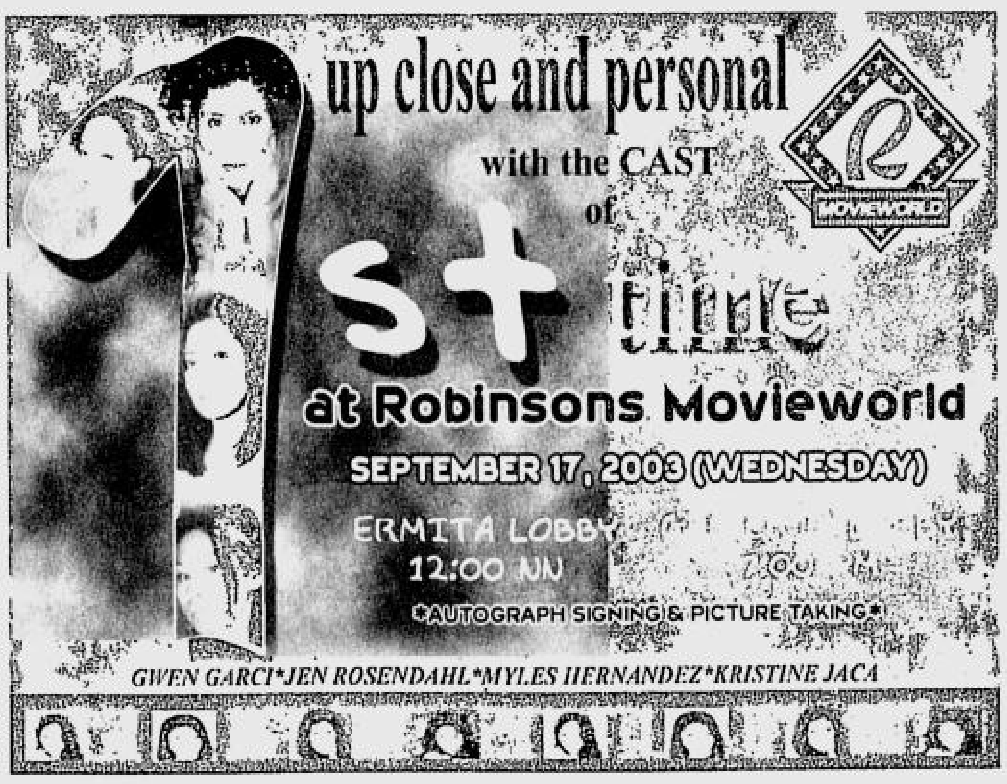
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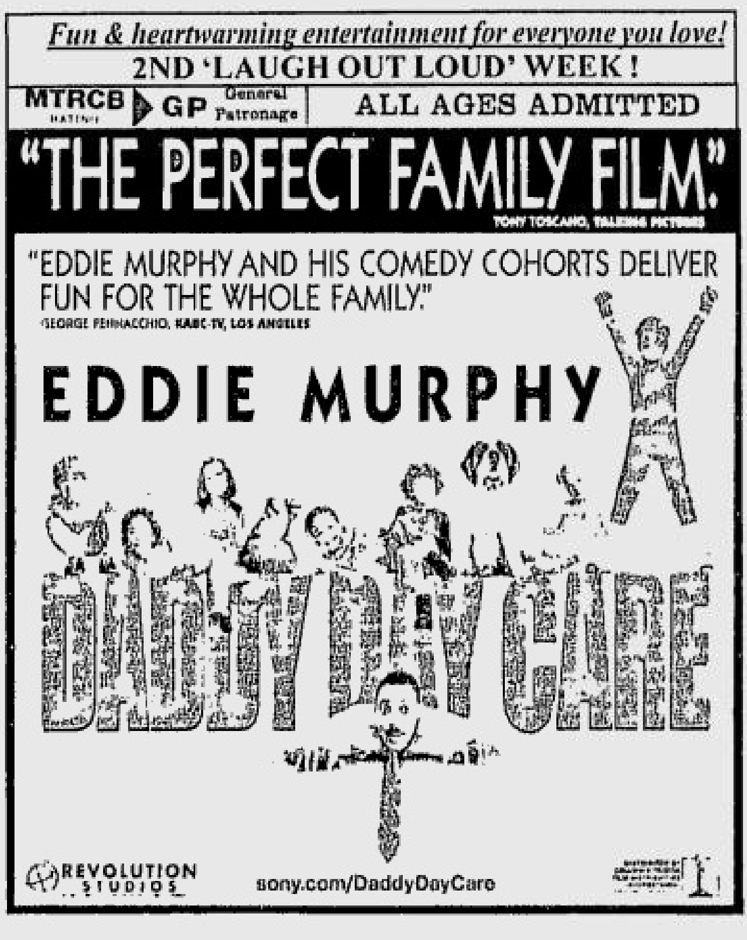
MOVIEWORLD

Hawkers Market
FOOD FESTIVAL
FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS
6PM ONWARDS
STARTS SEPT. 19
NESTEA
POWER PLANT MALL AT ROCKWELL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GEORGE PENNACCHIO, KABC-TV, LOS ANGELES
EDDIE MURPHY
DADDY DAY CARE
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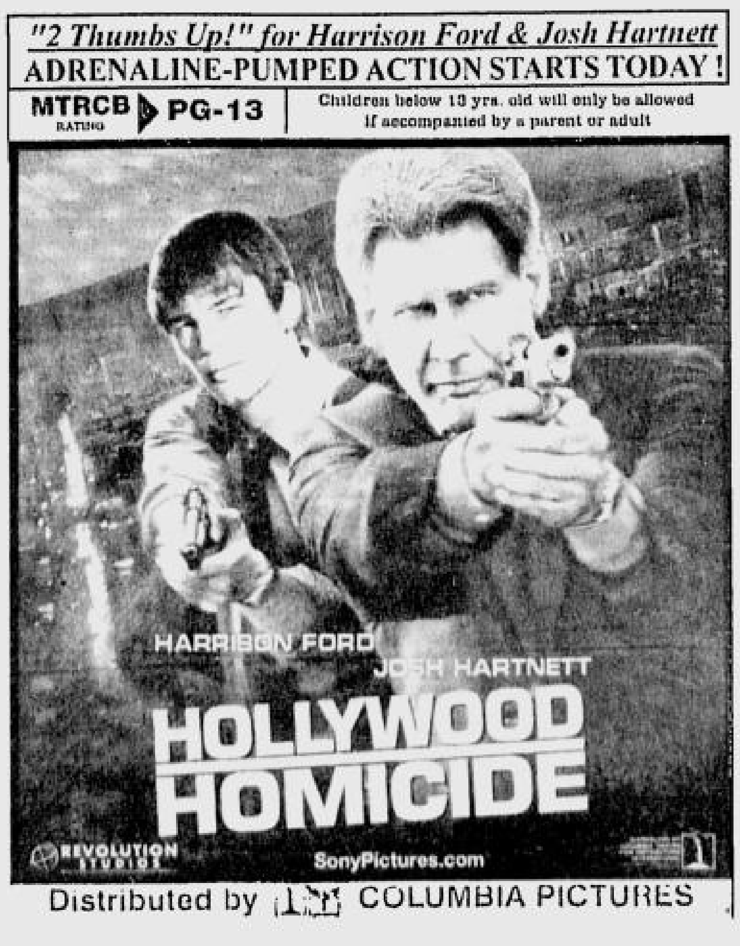
"2 Thumbs Up!" for Harrison Ford & Josh Hartnett
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Editor Louie C. Camino

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SM CINEMA

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Producer faces maximum penalty for illegal sex scenes

By Marinel R. Cruz

A MOVIE outfit might lose its permit to exhibit films after the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) found unapproved sex scenes inserted in one of its movies.

The MTRCB has also ordered the pullout of El Nino Films' "Malagkit" after a seven-member team found at least four unapproved sex scenes in the movie which they watched at a theater in Tanay Cinema on Sept. 9.

MTRCB Chair Consoliza Laguardia said she ordered El Niño Films' Mila Pascual to appear before an adjudication panel on Sept. 23, adding that the movie outfit might face revocation of its permit to exhibit films as maximum penalty.

Laguardia said she responded to a text message from an unidentified concerned citizen reporting the insertions in "Malagkit," which stars Maye Tongco, Sydney Segovia and Mon Confiado.

The questionable sex scenes include a "full shot" of a rape scene and of actors engaged in several graphic sex scenes.

Earlier, the MTRCB stopped the showing of "Kikay" and "Sagad," also produced by El Niño Films, because of unapproved sex scenes in the films.

The MTRCB also issued warnings to two cable operators for airing lewd programs at midnight.

Laguardia said Destiny Cable Inc. and Fil Products Cable might face administrative sanctions for showing "Pag Oras Mo Na, Oras Mo Na" and "Gamitan," respectively, at midnight in August. The two films were both given an R-18 rating by the MTRCB.

The MTRCB is also investigating the alleged airing of "objectionable" and "not suitable" scenes from "Pag Oras Mo Na, Oras Mo Na" of cable operator Destiny Cable on Aug. 26 between 10:30 p.m. and midnight, and "Gamitan" of Fil Products Cable on Aug. 16 in Calbayog, Samar at midnight, both on the Pinoy Box Office (PBO) Channel.

In a memorandum the MTRCB sent to Vic del Rosario, president of Viva Entertainment Inc., Laguardia said the movies had "prolonged bed scenes," which violate the MTRCB's "General Audience" and "Parental Guidance" classification for television.

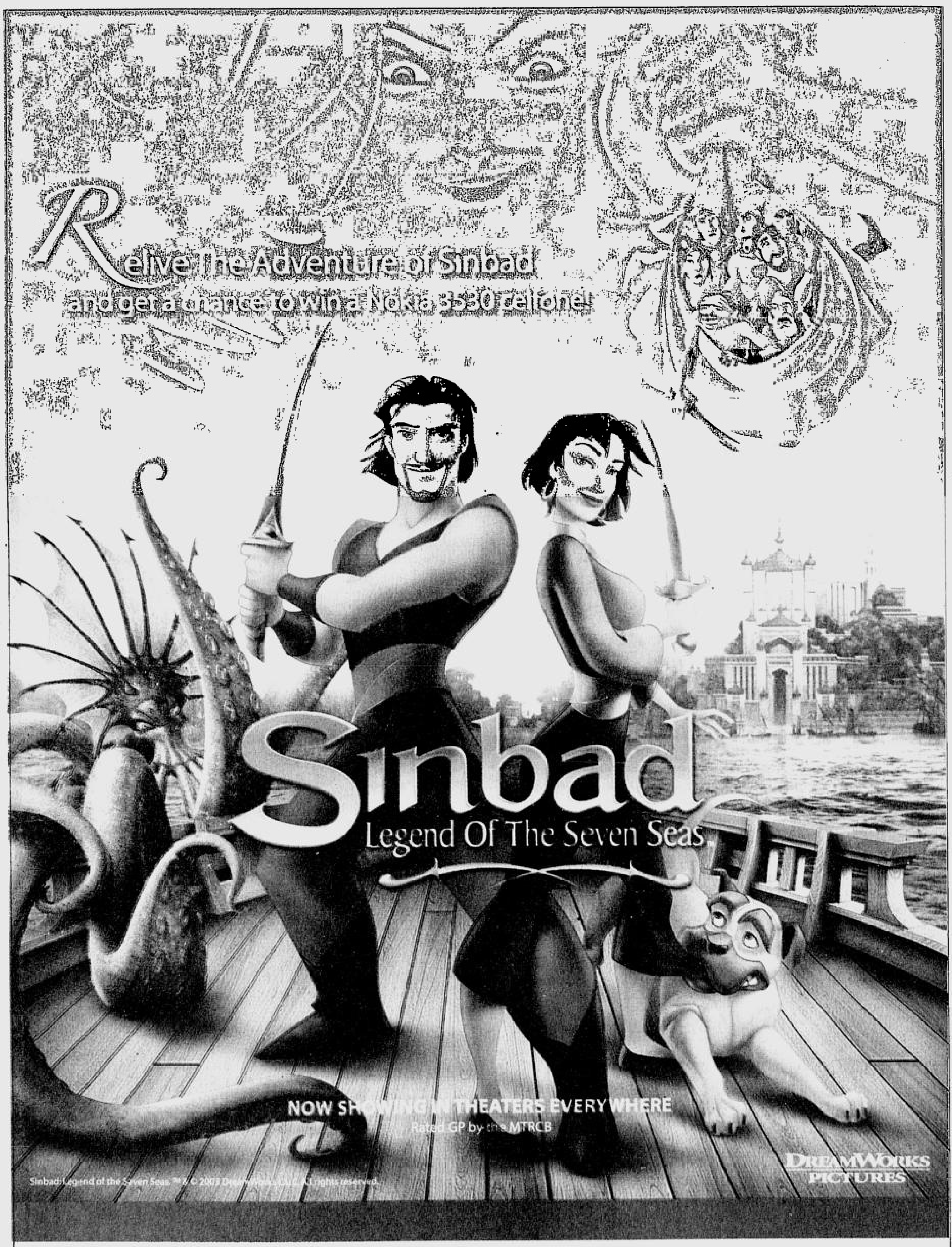
Viva Entertainment Inc. is the program provider of Pinoy Box Office (PBO) Channel.

In a letter sent to Laguardia, June Torejon, Viva Entertainment executive officer for broadcast, said "it is perhaps because Viva can be considered a neophyte in the cable business that instances like these arose."

Torejon said they had "voluntarily started self-regulating by removing scenes that may be objectionable and offensive to the viewing public."

Fil Products Cable manager Lambert Alia also sent a letter to Laguardia saying that the cable company has voluntarily shut off for 30 days, since Aug. 28, the programming of the PBO Channel.

Alia said the cable company "shall not ever air the PBO program unless its management guarantees it will not air movies that were rated R-18 by the MTRCB."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RITTER with wife Amy Yasbeck

Tribute to John Ritter to be aired on ABC

LOS ANGELES—Friends and colleagues of actor and comedian John Ritter, who died on Thursday after suffering a tear in his iorta will play tribute to him in an ABC News special.

"A Life of Laughter: Remembering John Ritter," an hour-long program anchored by Diane Sawyer, will air on Tuesday evening.

Those scheduled to be part of the special include Suzanne Somers and Joyce DeWitt, who costarred with Ritter in the 1977-84 sitcom "Three's Company," and Katey Sagal, his co-star on the ABC sitcom "8 Simple Rules for Dating My Teenage Daughter."

Ritter was laid to rest at a private funeral Monday, less than four days after dying suddenly. He was stricken on the set of "8 Simple Rules For Dating My Teenage Daughter" and was rushed to a hospital where he died. He was 54.

Officials at the ABC television network said Monday that no decision had yet been made on the fate of the series, which is entering its second year and which had been scheduled to resume transmission later this month.

The Emmy Award-winning actor, who was best known for his starring role in the 1970s and '80s TV show "Three's Company," was laid to rest at a private funeral Monday, less than four days after his death.

His publicist Lisa Kasteler declined to reveal details of the service attended by friends and family but said a larger memorial service was being planned for the popular star whose death was being mourned by Hollywood.

Funnyman Ritter left his wife of four years, actress Amy Yasbeck, as well as four children from two marriages. *AFP, AP*

Pana
CELEBRATES
45th
Anniversary
See more on page B8 to B11

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World Bank unit to hike exposure in RP

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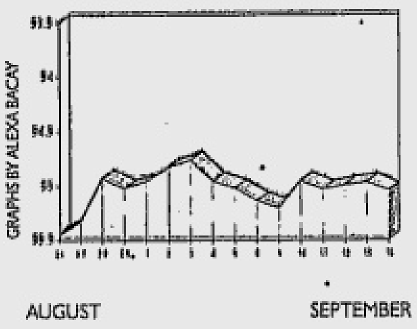

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As of 5 p.m., Sept. 16, 2003

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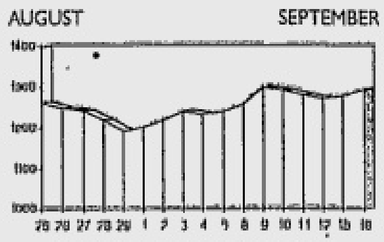
per ounce Hong Kong, Sept. 16, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Bargain-hunting lifts stocks

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

SHARE prices closed 1.36 percent higher yesterday, supported by selective bargain-hunting after recent losses, dealers said.

They said the pick-up appears technical and opportunistic, with the market's continuing concern about political issues ahead of elections next year.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 17.32 points to 1,295.41 after trading between 1,281.92 and 1,295.41.

Gainers outnumbered losers 28 to 24, while 36 stocks were unchanged.

Volume was 236.83 million shares worth P718.52 million after 142.77 million shares worth P926.56 million on Monday.

The all-shares index was down 1.15 points at 801.64 but the commercial-industrial index rose by 31.73 to 1,886.88 while the property index was up 8.09 to 577.80.

Mining was unchanged at 1,230.86, while the oil sector was up 0.03 at 1.38. The banking and finance sector was down 0.67 at 436.23.

"Technically, we are due for a rebound. Now is the right time for investors to accumulate while local share prices remain relatively cheap. The economies of the US and Japan are starting to pick up and we expect that to eventually spill over to the Philippines," said Ron Rodrigo of Accord Capital Equities.

Unicapital Securities senior analyst Elena Ponceca said the rise in PLDT's American Depository Re-ceipts as well as follow-through buying in select blue chips gave the market a boost. *AFP*

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE INTERNATIONAL Finance Corp. yesterday said it would increase its investments in the Philippines by 86 percent to $125 million in its fiscal year ending June 2004 from only $67 million in the fiscal year that ended last June.

IFC country manager Vipul Bhagat said the investment arm of the World Bank was holding talks with commercial banks, insurance firms and other companies in need of loans to restructure maturing debts.

Bhagat said the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has also approved its peso-denominated lending facility with an unlimited amount it could use to help local companies, including banks.

Bhagat said IFC would continue to invest in the Philippines—among its top 10 countries in terms of loan exposure—despite rising political risks in the run-up to presidential elections in May 2004.

"We take a medium to long-term view of the country and we think the country has a lot of strengths and we intend to invest, capitalizing on those long-term strengths," Bhagat said.

"The elections that are coming up in the next nine months obviously play a role, but play a relatively minor role."

This year, IFC was originally targeting to invest $150 million in the Philippines but several projects failed to materialize, including an asset management company to acquire the bad assets of Bank of the Philippine Islands, a proposed joint venture company with Price Smart Philippines, and a proposed cyber park in Eastwood City in Libis.

For next year, Bhagat said the IFC was in talks with borrowers including a developer of the Parañaque-Cavite coastal road and an information technology group led by Stradcom.

The coastal road project wanted to borrow $30 million while Stradcom IT was looking at a $25-million loan.

"We are also open to making investments both as loan or equity with special purpose vehicle companies which would be buying non-performing assets of banks," Bhagat explained.

The IFC projects that pushed through this year were a $20-million investment in Banco de Oro, $1 million in the Asian Eye Institute, $10-million with HSBC, $190,000 in Legacy Scholarship and Pension Plan, $30.59-million loan to Manila Water Co., and a $4-million facility to Software Venture International Inc.

Banco de Oro said it was planning to issue $100 million worth of five-year notes to finance its projects.

The Philippines is the IFC's seventh biggest exposure. IFC had been investing in the Philippines over the last 40 years. During the last four years, it had committed to finance $552 million worth of projects.

Last week, the central bank approved IFC's proposal to open a peso lending facility for the first time.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said IFC wanted to open a peso-lending facility to remove the exchange risks for the borrowers. The term of the loans could range from five to seven years.

Gov't exceeds budget deficit target for August by ₱5B

THE MACAPAGAL administration overshot its P8.115-billion budget deficit ceiling in August by more than P5 billion due to higher spending as the government settled contractual obligations.

However, for the first eight months, the deficit was estimated at P110 billion, still below the P127.115-billion target for the period.

August and March were the only months this year that the government exceeded the deficit ceiling.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho stressed that revenue collections last month continued to perform above expectations.

The finance chief said he was not updated on the expenditure side although Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin admitted two weeks ago that spending could exceed the target by more than P3 billion as the government took advantage of the fiscal savings in the first seven months to settle its obligations.

Camacho said the Bureau of Internal Revenue exceeded its August target enough to offset the shortfall of the Bureau of Customs. The Bureau of Treasury also continued to surpass its revenue target.

From January to July, the budget gap stood at only P95.4 billion against a target of P119 billion.

Boncodin said the government would use some of the P23.6 billion in savings in the first seven months to settle accounts unpaid in the first half when the administration was scrimping in spending and paid only the salaries of public employees.

In August, the BIR collected P38.435 billion or P422 million more than the P38.01-billion target for the month even as Customs missed its P8.7-billion target by about P400 million.

Clarissa S. Batino

S&P to keep RP's stable outlook

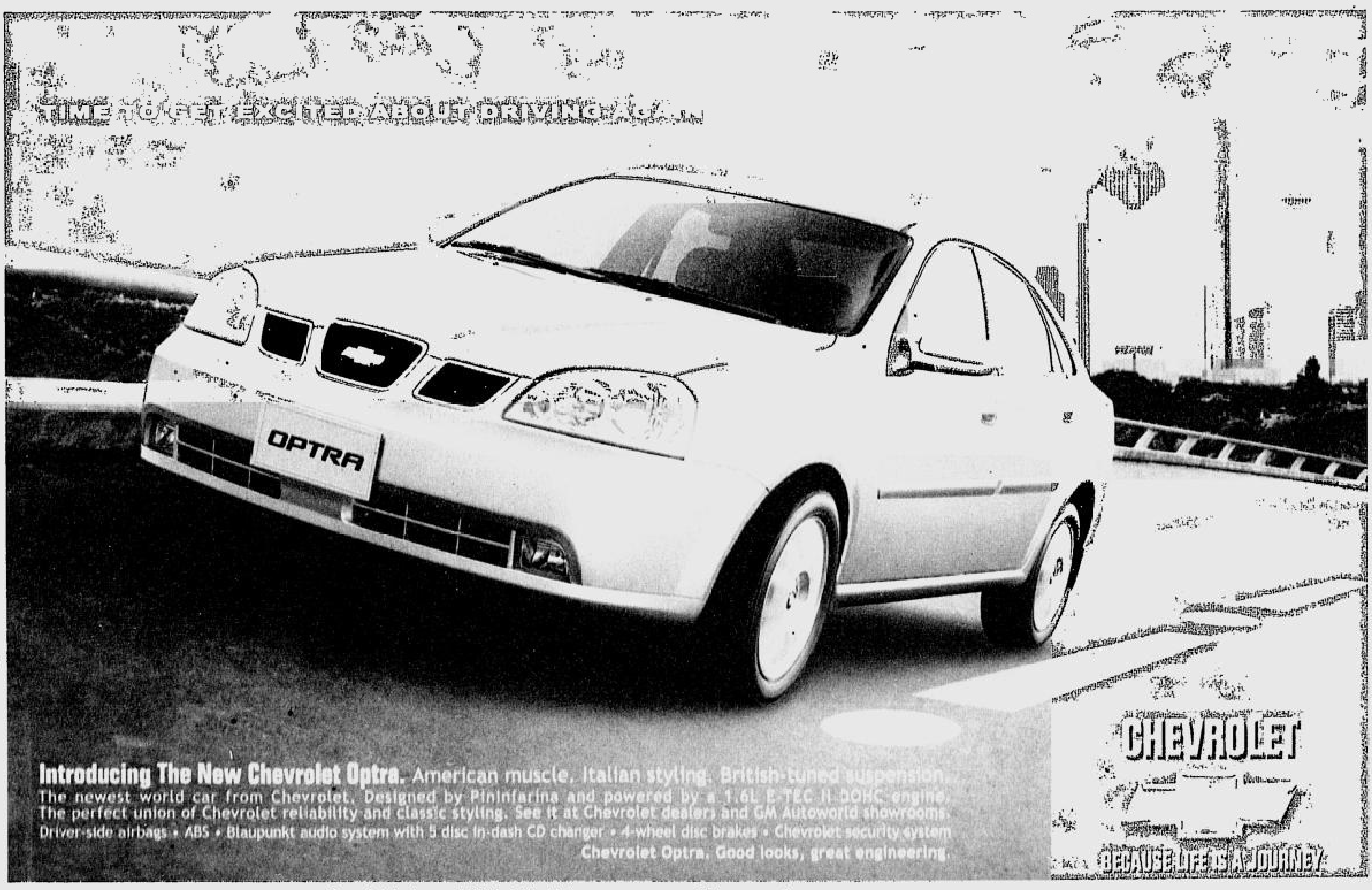
RATING agency Standard & Poor's yesterday said it would keep a stable outlook on Philippine debts but stressed that it would take more than keeping the budget deficit in check for seven months to convince investors that the fiscal sector had turned around.

S&P officials led by Takahira Ogawa, lead analyst for the Philippines, are conducting an annual review of the country's progress in relation to its credit rating. The review will end tomorrow.

"As of today, we are keeping a stable outlook for the Philippines. There are a lot of political jitters leading to the May elections but we have already taken this into account in our previous actions," Ogawa said in an interview.

S&P had downgraded its rating on Philippine debt in April from "BB plus" to "BB" following an adjustment of the stable outlook to negative in October 2002.

S&P earlier said the deficit blowout last year dimmed the country's chances of reducing its public debt substantially over time.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Napocor justifies power rate hike plea

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A BOTTLENECK in Mindanao's transmission system arising from the heightened fighting between government troops and Moro rebels in February caused a steep rise in power generation costs, officials of the National Power Corp. said yesterday.

In an interview, Napocor president Rogelio Murga said that due to transmission constraints, Napocor was unable to maximize the use of the Agus hydropower complex resulting in a higher utilization of oil-fired power plants.

"We give priority in dispatching power plants with the cheapest generation costs, in this case the hydro plants. But if we cannot do this, we have to resort to other power sources," Murga explained.

The official was reacting to criticisms hurled at Napocor for asking the Energy Regulatory Commission for authority to raise its selling rate in Mindanao by P1.78 per kilowatthour from P1.02 to P2.80 per kWh.

Napocor is also seeking a 50-centavo power rate increase in Luzon from P2.13 to P2.63 per kWh and a 40-centavo increase in the Visayas from P2.24 to P2.63 per kWh.

On Monday, Lanao del Norte Rep. Alipio Cirilo Badelles decried Napocor's move saying this would make investments in Mindanao nonviable.

RP, Japan seen pursuing bilateral free trade agreement

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PHILIPPINES and Japan are now working more closely toward the proposed free trade agreement between the two countries as bilateral trade pacts gain more popularity in view of the collapse of the 5th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Cancun, Mexico.

"WTO is bogging down, so Japan and the Philippines are saying that with our complementary (trade needs), we can help each other. We are now trying to find out in what areas we can maximize our potentials," said Trade and Industry Assistant Secretary Mauino Haresco in an interview.

Haresco said the Philippines was undertaking studies on how much the planned Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership (JPEP) would benefit the country. Under the JPEP, the two countries will grant duty-free access to products coming from each other.

He said the Philippines was looking at the services sector as the biggest beneficiary should JPEP pushes through. He added that the country hoped to send more of its labor force, particularly nurses and caregivers, to Japan and thus help improve the country's unemployment rate.

George Manzano, a professor at the University of Asia and the Pacific who conducted a study on the proposed RP-Japan bilateral trade pact, said that preliminary indications showed that the two countries would mutually benefit from JPEP in terms of trade volume.

Manzano said that with the JPEP in place, Philippine exports to Japan, which stood at $1.061 billion in 2001, were expected to increase.

He said, however, that the increase in the Japanese products' access to the local market would be greater than the improvement in the Philippine products' access to the Japanese market.

This, he said, was because more Japanese products exported to the Philippines were currently slapped tariffs, while most Philippine exports already enjoy duty-free access to Japan.

His study, which was presented yesterday during a forum held at the National Economic Development Authority office in Makati, noted that 79.03 percent of Philippine exports to Japan were already enjoying zero tariff, while only 50.99 percent of Japanese exports to the Philippines were granted the same.

"On a purely market access criterion, Japan will appear to gain more than the Philippines, given the JPEP," he said in his paper.

Because of this, Manzano said the Philippines should be keener than Japan in crafting the JPEP's rules of origin, or the basis for determining what products could be included in the duty-free list.

DOF urged to scrap rule removing AUV tax break

THE LOCAL automotive industry yesterday asked the Department of Finance to reconsider its decision to implement Revenue Regulation No. 4-2003, which withdrew tax exemptions earlier granted to Asian utility vehicles (AUVs).

The Truck Manufacturers Association Inc. said it was hoping that the DOF would scrap RR 4-2003 and stick to the its earlier decision to continue applying the old excise tax system until the newly passed auto excise tax law takes effect in October.

During a public hearing on the new auto excise tax law's implementing rules and regulation last week, DOF officials led by Finance Undersecretary Grace Tan gave in to the request of the industry to scrap RR 4-2003. The decision was made upon the prodding of House committee on ways and means chair Rep. Jules Ledesma, who was present during the hearing.

However, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camancho, who was adamant to implement RR 4-2003, was out of the country when the public hearing took place. Camacho immediately withdrew the DOF's decision to scrap RR 4-2003 after being briefed about the events during the hearing.

In the meantime, the inter-agency committee tasked to finish the implementing rules and regulations of the new auto excise tax law failed to meet the Sept. 15 deadline. In view of this, industry players are losing hope that the new auto excise tax law will be implemented on Oct. 1 (the law requires a two-week gap between the IRR's publication and the auto excise tax law's implementation).

"The implication of this is that the industry will suffer from a much lower, if not, zero sales until Oct. 15. This is because no one will make a purchase knowing that car prices would be lower after Oct. 15," said TMA chair Frank Nacua in an interview.

He said the industry already showed signs of weaker sales due to consumers' anticipation of the new auto excise tax law. He noted that the industry suffered a 50-percent month-on-month sales drop in August.

He said the industry, especially car makers, would not be able to dispose of its current inventory until Oct. 15 if the DOF does not scrap RR 4-2003.

"It (DOF) does not understand that both the government and the industry would be losers (with the RR 4-2003 in place) because we will suffer from sales decline, and this would mean lost revenue for the government," he said.

Michelle V. Remo

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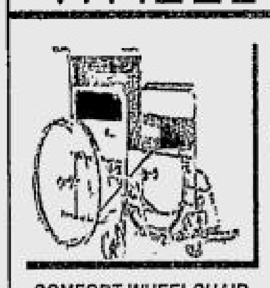
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DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGIES
Date: October 1-2, 2003 Time: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Fee: P8,500.00
- Acquire a working knowledge of the basic concepts and principles of strategic marketing management;
- Develop analytical skills required to formulate effective marketing strategies;
- Integrate the concepts and techniques learned in implementing business decisions; and
- Learn how to infuse a strategic marketing orientation in the light of a new developments and issues in the Philippine and global market settings.

EXECUTIVE LEVEL LEADERSHIP: Becoming an Executive Leader
Date: October 9-10, 2003 Time: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Fee: P8,500.00
- Identify the primary forces that influence and impact executive level leaders;
- Apply personal and organizational focus in a team meeting where goals are established;
- Use specific methods to help you identify your goals; and
- Sequence the steps to take when translating a vision into action.

FINANCE FOR NON-FINANCE MANAGERS
Date: October 15-17, 2003 Time: 8:30 am - 5: 30 pm Fee: P8,500.00
- Be familiar with the nature and scope of financial management;
- Learn to analyze basic financial statements through the computation of ratios;
- Obtain an overview of working capital management and the capital budgeting process;
- Attain greater understanding of funds flow statements; and
- Gain confidence in financial planning i.e., in the preparation of projected financial statements.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT Seminar/Workshop
Date: October 28-30, 2003 Time: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Fee: P10,500.00
- Define project and program;
- Describe the differences between project and functional management;
- Apply financial techniques in comparing and selecting projects;
- Describe the elements of a statement of work (SOW);
- Develop a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and schedules using the Gantt Chart; and
- Control project budgets and schedules using Earned Value concepts and formulas.

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Date: October 28-29, 2003 Time: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Fee: P8,500.00
- Improve the confidence level of your marketing staff;
- Strengthen the understanding of why brands succeed and why brands fail;
- Provide alternatives to handling successful and unsuccessful brands; and
- Improve advertising creativity.

For details and reservations, please call Elsie or Lea at telephone numbers 634-2834 or 637-0912 loc. 241; fax number: 634-2823; or e-mail us at ealaguador@uap.edu.ph or visit our web site at www.uap.edu.ph/schools/smn.

Not-so-distress sale

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

IT LOOKS like the country's major banks have taken to disposing of their bulging nonperforming real estate inventories themselves, rather than selling their entire property holdings at deep discounts to foreign buccaneers contemplated under the recently passed Special Purpose Asset Vehicle Law.

Following the limited success of Philippine National Bank, Union Bank is next month holding a special auction of repossessed lands, houses, townhomes, and condominium units.

The initial Union Bank list includes a few choice gems, like two vacant lots in Batangas' Punta Fuego Resort, the weekend Forbes Park, and 13 fairway properties within the Orchard Golf and Country Club in Cavite.

The choice properties admittedly are no fire sale; the Punta Fuego lots have a base price of P10,000 a square meter while the Orchard's have a minimum asking price of a little over P3,800/sq.m.

As a come-on, Union Bank is accepting a low 10-percent down payment for all the auctioned properties, with the balance payable up to 15 years at fixed interest rate of 13 percent/year for the first three years and 15 percent for the remaining 12 years.

Rather than shy away from foreign buyers, the Concepcions, whose Fort Bonifacio condo project nearly sunk with the collapse of Urban Bank, have taken to targeting the overseas Filipino communities to ratchet up sales for its second Fort offering, Fairways Tower.

According to the grapevine, a special marketing group has been dispatched by the Concepcions to key US cities to capitalize on the buzz expected to be generated by President Macapagal-Arroyo's trip to the United States next week as well as President Bush's return visit to the Philippines next month.

French leave

MERDE! The rebellion at PublicisAMA advertising agency has spread to its sister media buying agency.

Even the French-designated chair and president of its media-buying agency, Zenith Optimedia, have resigned in sympathy with the abrupt departure of the entire creative/account management officers and staff of PublicisAMA.

According to the grapevine, Zenith Optimedia chair Nestor Reantazo and CEO/president August Benitez handed in their resignation letters on Monday to Publicis Asia Pacific chair Guillaume Levy-Lambert, who had flown in from Singapore to do damage control.

Reantazo's sudden loss is a double-blow to Publicis since he is one of the four nominees of the French parent agency in the seven-member PublicisAMA board. With Reantazo's defection, PublicisAMA's chair/president Lito de Joya now has effective control of the board.

Incidentally, De Joya, son of AMA founder/industry legend, Antonio de Joya, and his chief finance officer Lino Marable are the only officers left in PublicisAMA.

For years, the largest all-Filipino advertising agency, AMA, succumbed to the globalization trend and merged with Publicis and its local partner, Basic, just four years ago.

After the death of Basic CEO Antonio Mercado, AMA career officers woke up to find that it was the French multinational that effectively controlled the supposedly Filipino-led joint venture.

Now the smart money is betting that, given the deep divisions, a divorce between Publicis and AMA is but a foregone conclusion.

In the meantime, the other Philippine units under the Publicis umbrella like Ace/Saatchi & Saatchi, Hemisphere Leo Burnett and Jimenez D'Arcy are waiting in the wings like the other competing agencies for a chance to pick up multimillion-peso accounts likely to fall from the messy divorce.

Off to a flying start

THE BUSINESS class section of Northwest Airlines out of Manila is solidly booked until the end of the month, a most welcome surprise to airline executives since late September supposedly marks the start of the lean season.

How full? A low-key businessman who has decided to fly to New York after the GMA visit so he could avoid the presidential entourage could not get a booking despite his already holding a platinum card.

Heard through the grapevine

SCHOOLS are supposed to be safe, steady investments but this erstwhile leading university can barely keep its nose above interest payments to the banks following a botched expansion program in Cavite.

Given its shaky finances and its succession issues, the university looks like a prime candidate for a takeover bid.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

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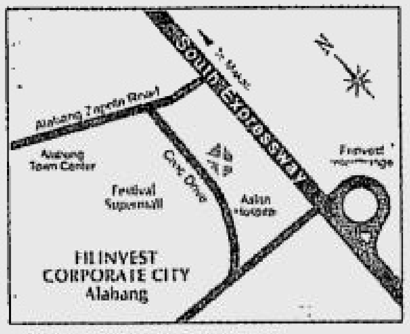
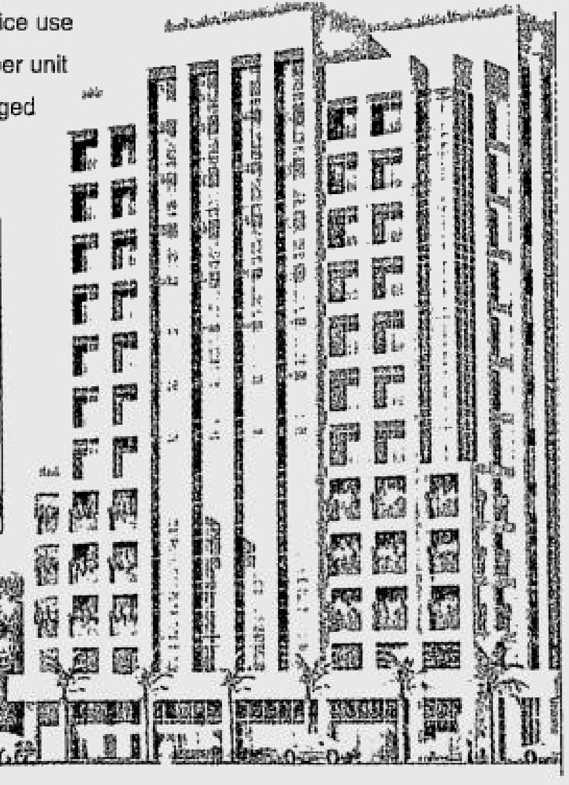


*Right across Asian Hospital, Filinvest Alabang



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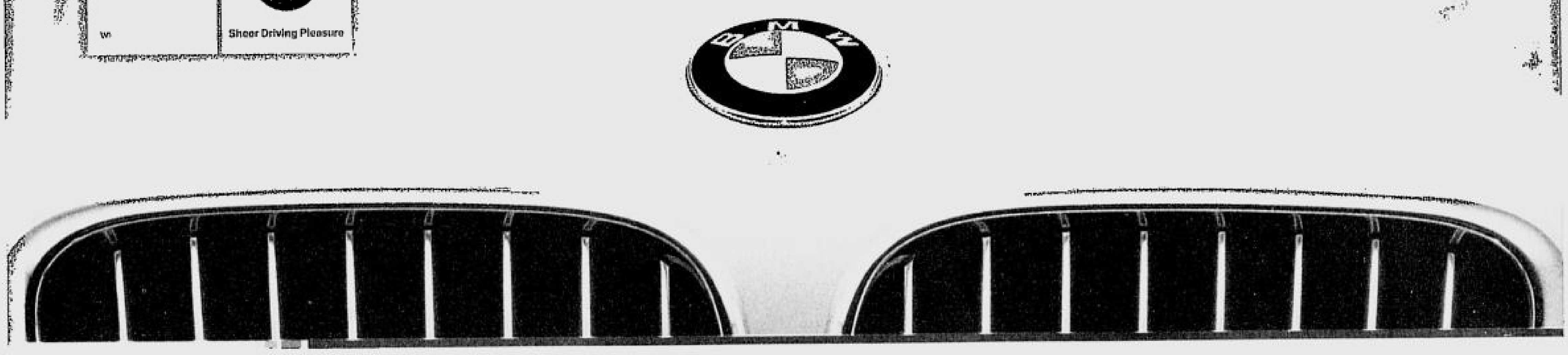

The Marque Of A Wise Investor - Still

Urgent News! All BMW 316i and 318i models now available at new post excise tax prices, but are limited.

Dear Friends,

I previously appraised you of the impact of both the exchange rate (Euro/Peso) and the proposed Senate Bill on Excise Tax.

Whilst the Peso decline in value against other major currencies is well documented daily in the press – and a new Automotive Excise Tax Bill has now been signed into law by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo – it still awaits final implementing guidelines.

Fortunately for us all, the new Bill is favorable for passenger cars. Yes, it will result in new BMW suggested retail prices being re-aligned due to new Automotive Excise Taxes and the effects of the Euro-Peso relationship. But do not expect all models to be substantially reduced.

So, should you wait to buy your new BMW?

For some models, the answer is certainly "Yes"!

But for all our BMW 316i and 318i models, the answer is a categorical **"NO"**!

BMW's commitment to both you, our customers, and our authorized dealer network has resulted in a decision to sell these two models at the new post excise tax prices, in order to support our retail partners and our assembly partner.

So, there is no need to delay your purchase of these models. Select and buy any 316i or 318i model today, as it is definite that the prices will not be lowered further.

You have my assurance on this. But stock of these models is limited, so act now!

Visit your Authorized BMW Dealer, and become one of the first to own a new BMW in this new excise tax era – even if it has yet to arrive!

By doing this, you make your mark as a wise investor.

Sincerely,

Mark Gilbert
President
BMW Philippines Corporation

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PGA Cars BMW
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[illegible] • Fax [illegible]

Performance Auto BMW
Magallanes St. corner P. Burgos St., Cebu City
Tel. (032) 256 3491 • Fax (032) 256 3492

Premier Cars BMW
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City of San Fernando, Pampanga
Tel. (045) 963 7777 • Fax (045) 963 3355

This special pricing offer is limited to a volume of 316i Limousine, 318i Limousine, 318i Executive and 318i M Sport models, held in stock as of 8 September 2003

Compliance with corporate governance rule still poor–SEC

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission will tighten its supervision of unlisted but publicly held companies in view of their poor compliance with corporate governance rules.

"There must be a conscientious effort to go after them," SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said Monday during the launching of the Philippines 5000, a joint publication of the SEC and CIBI Information Inc. featuring the country's Top 5,000 firms.

Bautista said it was difficult for the SEC to keep track of how many non-listed companies were indeed public, meaning they had a wide base of shareholders, because some did not report correctly.

Unlisted public companies or those with securities registered with the SEC have had a very low compliance rate with the rule requiring the election of independent directors.

Public companies are defined as those with assets of at least P50 million and 200 or more stockholders each holding at least 100 shares of a class of equity securities.

At present, there are only 234 listed companies and 141 registered or public companies, consisting mostly of clubs. Only 26 percent of the 141 have complied with the independent director rule.

Under the Securities Regulation Code, all publicly held companies should have two independent directors or at least 20 percent of total board seats, whichever is lower.

"Once these companies realized the SEC was serious in making them comply with corporate governance rules and reportorial requirements similar to listed companies, maybe they would be encouraged to list," Bautista said.

Bautista noted that despite the SEC's urging, the country's top companies did not want to list in the stock market to raise capital because many were still family owned and that they did not want to be subjected to the stringent requirements imposed on listed firms.

In a speech before finance executives earlier this month, Bautista noted that a number of companies regulated by the SEC have yet to fully comply with the Code of Corporate Governance.

"The preliminary results of our assessment of compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance suggest that although majority of the covered companies have adopted their own Manuals of Corporate Governance, a good number of them have yet to internalize the principles enshrined in the code," Bautista had said.

Forum starts drilling 2nd well in Cebu

FORUM Exploration Inc. started last Friday the drilling of the second well in search of oil in Daanbantayan town in Northern Cebu, which if successful would enable the firm to begin oil production within the year.

Ranilo Abando, director of the energy resource development bureau of the Department of Energy, said in a bulletin that the well called Forum 2-X reached a depth of 727 feet as of Monday.

Abando said Forum Exploration planned to drill up to 1,750 feet to reach its main objectives the Malubog formation which was formed during the late Miocene period or sometime between 24 million and 5 million years ago.

The official said Forum 2-X also aimed to penetrate the Maingit reservoirs formed during the Upper Miocene age, which have estimated reserves of between 0.6 million and 3.86 million barrels of oil.

In the meantime, Forum Exploration's Canadian parent company Forum Energy Corp. said in a statement that the results of drilling activities on Forum 1-X, which was completed in July, would be further assessed and tested through Forum 2-X.

"Certainly all signs look very encouraging and we have every confidence that Forum 2-X will yield positive results, paving the way forward to aggressively developing the potential reserves in the area," Forum Energy president and chief executive Larry Youell said. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

INTEREST RATES

September 16, 2003-
MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 16-Sep-03	MART1 15-Sep-03
1 Month	6.2615	6.2813
3 Months	6.2789	6.2731
6 Months	6.7588	6.7558
1 Year	7.9077	8.2923
2 Years	9.4143	9.4192
3 Years	9.9688	9.9942
4 Years	10.3033	10.3327
5 Years	10.623	10.6442
7 Years	11.3	11.2577
10 Years	11.555	11.575
20 Years	12.0067	12.0288
25 Years	12.29	12.2942

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

SENIOR EXECUTIVES' MISSION TO RP PHOTO BY MAN PENAM...A/PCPO-MALACA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo poses with members of the visiting US senior executives' mission to the Philippines led by Robert Driscoll (right, seated), Edison Energy SVP for the Asia-Pacific region, and RP-US Business Council chair Ramon del Rosario (left, seated).

RP seen missing current account surplus targets

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE COUNTRY is not likely to meet its $2.356-billion current account surplus target this year due to the slowdown in export growth.

This prompted the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to review not only this year's target but also the $2-billion surplus goal for next year.

"We need to firm up our targets in 2004 in view of recent developments in the market," Diwa C. Guinigundo, managing director of the department of economic research of the central bank, told reporters.

Guinigundo said the slowdown in exports prompted the economic research team to revisit the external payments numbers this year and next to determine whether the targets were still achievable.

"We will not change any targets this year but we will tell the public if we could not meet them. For 2004, the targets are under review," Guinigundo said.

Another official said the current account surplus was being substantially eroded by the drop in export receipts.

Based on an expected 5-percent growth in exports this year, the central bank earlier estimated that the country's current account would post a surplus of $2.356 billion by the end of the year while the balance-of-payment deficit would be contained at $1.13 billion.

Next year, the BSP said the BOP could hit a surplus of $1.2 billion although this was computed way ahead of the release of the July export numbers.

The current account and BOP targets are important in drawing up the BSP's defense of the peso. A declining dollar inflow puts pressure on the country's external reserves and consequently, adversely affects the peso.

Export receipts in July contracted by 7.9 percent to $2.97 billion from year-ago level while the seven-month growth in exports was only 0.5 percent, or way below the growth target.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As Sept. 16, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4	4	4	4	40,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	12,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	43	43	42	42.5	845,100
China Banking Corp.	660	660	660	660	1,390
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	34.5	34.5	34	34.5	106,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	29.5	30	29.5	29.5	122,000
Prudential Bank	350	350	320	320	690
Philippine National Bank	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	61,100
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	4,800
Security Bank Corp.	19	19	19	19	30,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	28	28	28	28	41,500
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	39,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1660	1670	1660	1670	310
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1205	1205	1200	1200	610
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.75	24.75	24.75	24.75	5,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.66	0.68	0.66	0.68	1,690,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	690	695	690	695	14,230
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.046	0.047	0.045	0.047	1,700,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.049	0.047	0.048	3,200,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	20,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3	3	3	3	40,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	2,320,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	40,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	630	640	625	635	115,280
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	12,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	14.25	14.75	14.25	14.75	719,100
Manila Electric Co. B	21.75	22.75	21.75	22.25	910,700
Petron Corp.	1.98	2	1.98	2	2,659,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.74	1.74	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.75	2.8	2.75	2.8	1,574,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	100,000
Negros Navigation Co.Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	40,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	50,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31	31	31	3,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17.5	18.5	17.5	18.5	636,200
RFM Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	50,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	400,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54	54.5	53	54.5	68,600
San Miguel Corp. B	62.5	63	62.5	63	299,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.6	65,477,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	50,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.031	0.031	0.03	0.031	3,500,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	15,000
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	2.26	2.26	2.26	2.26	5,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.58	0.6	0.57	0.59	14,880,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.14	700,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.245	0.26	2,750,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	50,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	18.5	18.75	18.25	18.5	884,800
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	100,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.11	20,000
Ionics Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	39,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.88	1.96	1.88	1.96	1,666,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.8	0.81	0.8	0.81	120,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1,180,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	1,420,000
Music Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	850,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.24	0.245	2,180,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	186,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	530,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825	1,200,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	3,700
Steniel Manufacturing	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	1,180,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	230,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.155	0.16	560,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	24.75	24.75	24.75	24.75	698,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	342,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.18	0.19	0.18	0.19	270,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	1,360,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	4,010,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	610,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.18	560,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.2	26,052,000
MINING					
Omico Corp.	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	12,000,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	44,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	10,000,000
Pacifica	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	3,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,304,500	49,167,880.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	130,258,810	500,485,930.00
PRO	33,204,000	168,463,350.00
Mining	12,000,000	38,400.00
OIL	60,000,000	219,700.00
GRAND TOTALS:	236,767,310	718,375,260.00

DISCLOSURES

ELECTED directors of First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp. were Vicente Co Chien Jr., Ma. Louisa Gonzales, Jack Huang, Cecilio Pedro, Jimmy Soo, Paulino Soo and A. Bayani Tan.

* * *

MRC Allied Industries Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Oct. 30, 8 a.m. at the McKinley Room of Manila Polo Club, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of Sept. 26 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. will hold a special stockholders' meeting on Oct. 17, 2 p.m. at the 32/F of Jollibee Plaza Building, Emerald Avenue, Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of Sept. 17 are entitled to participate in the meeting.

* * *

ELECTED directors of United Paragon Mining Corp. were Alfredo Ramos, Eduardo Castillo, Carlos Dominguez, Maximo Licauco III, Ricardo Miguel Ramos, Manuel Recto and Augusto Sunico.

* * *

MANILA Broadcasting Co. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Oct. 7, 3 p.m. at the Star City Theater, CCP Complex, Pasay City.

* * *

FRANCIS Hernando was appointed chief financial officer of ISM Communications Corp.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Estates Corp. denied having any information that could explain the 50-percent increase in its share price.

* * *

EIB Realty Developers Inc. sold its lots in Roxas Boulevard and Taguig as well as condominium units in One McKinley Place worth over P709.6 million and then settled its past due loans with Export and Industry Bank.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

September 16, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.886132	1.000000	54.985000
Japan	Yen	0.007546	0.008516	0.468300
United Kingdom	Pound	1.418697	1.601000	88.031000
Hongkong	Dollar	0.113622	0.128222	7.050300
Switzerland	Franc	0.641985	0.724480	39.835500
Canada	Dollar	0.648991	0.732386	40.270200
Singapore	Dollar	0.505062	0.569963	31.339400
Australia	Dollar	0.589615	0.665380	36.585900
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.363019	2.666667	146.626700
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.236296	0.266660	14.662300
Brunei	Dollar	0.503627	0.568343	31.250300
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000105	0.000118	0.006500
Thailand	Baht	0.021778	0.024576	1.351300
UAE	Dirham	0.241288	0.272294	14.972100
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.128500	62.050600
Argentina	Peso	0.306620	0.346021	19.026000
Brazil	REAL	0.306938	0.346380	19.045700
Denmark	Kroner	0.134691	0.151999	8.357700
India	Rupee	0.019390	0.021882	1.203200
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.233224	0.263193	14.471700
Mexico	New Peso	0.080874	0.091266	5.018300
New Zealand	Dollar	0.519178	0.585892	32.215300
Norway	Kroner	0.120901	0.136437	7.502000
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015411	0.017391	0.956200
South Africa	Rand	0.119963	0.135378	7.443800
Korea	Won	0.000756	0.000853	0.046900
Sweden	Kroner	0.109270	0.123311	6.780300
Syria	Pound	0.021099	0.023810	1.309200
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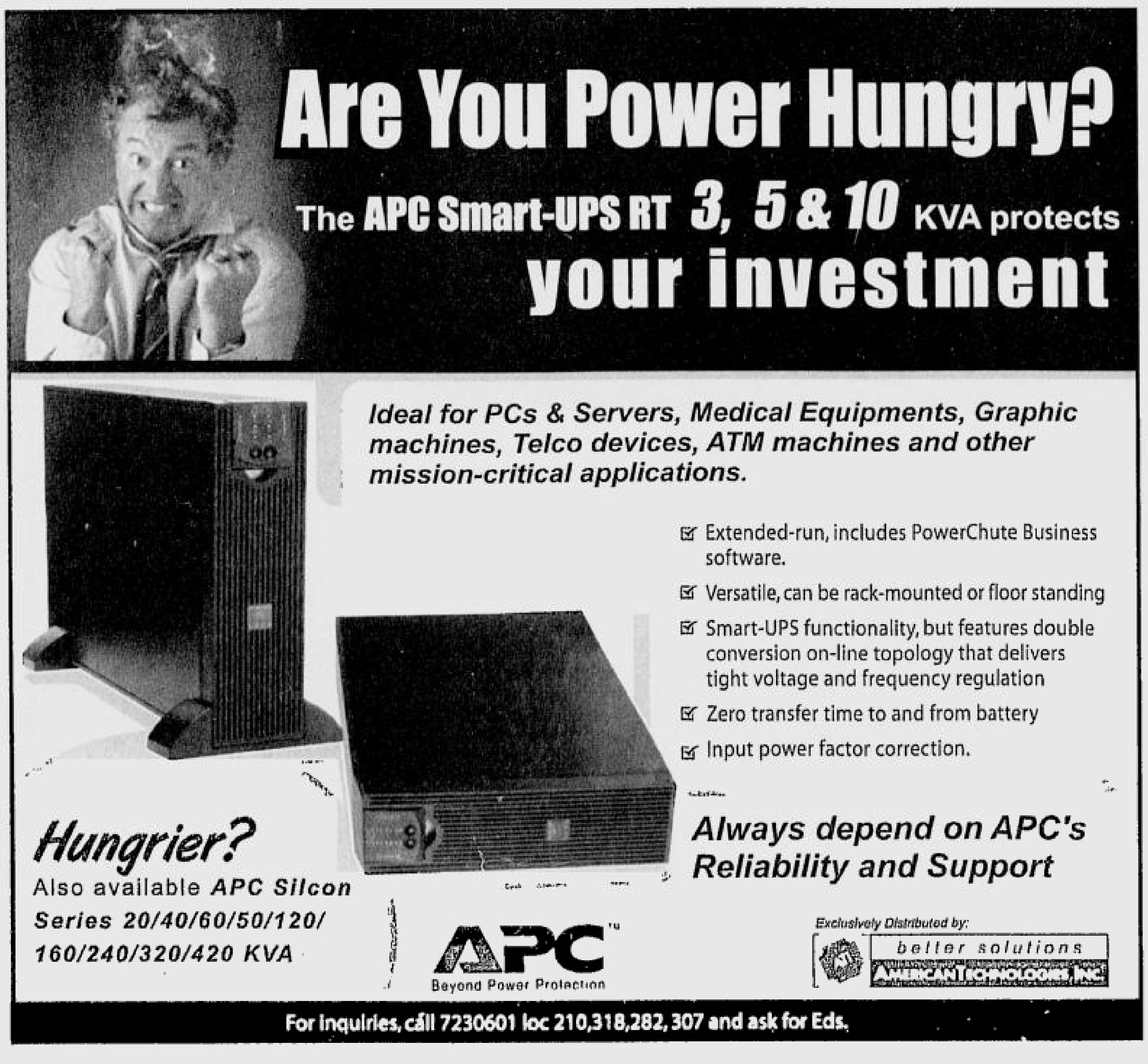

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Goh sees Asean moving toward common market

SINGAPORE—Leaders of the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations could endorse plans to move toward a common market at their annual summit next month, Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said.

Southeast Asia leaders were aware they faced growing competition from China and India, and needed to become more attractive to international investors, Goh said in a interview published in the Financial Times on Tuesday.

The push for an Asian regional free trade agreement may gain momentum after the collapse of World Trade Organization talks in Mexico this weekend.

"The leaders understand the need to integrate the economies, but the will to move faster is not yet clear, partly because of their own domestic considerations," Goh said.

Economic ministers from the Association of South East Asia Nations (Asean) plus China, Japan and South Korea are due to report on the feasibility of developing a vast East Asian Free Trade Agreement (Eafta) at a leaders' summit on the Indonesian island of Bali in October.

"I think the leaders will endorse this idea in Bali," Goh said.

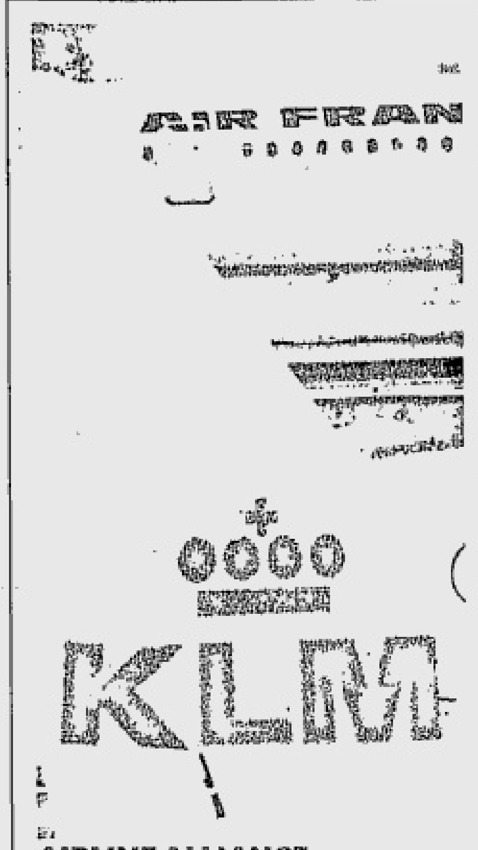
Southeast Asian nations have already agreed to implement an Asean Free Trade Area which aims to eliminate intra-regional tariffs and non-tariff barriers.

Asean founders Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand cut the vast majority of their tariffs on goods to between zero and five percent from this year. The four less-developed members are to reduce tariffs in the next decade.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Singapore, whose combined imports and exports are three times greater than its gross domestic product, has been a pioneer of free trade agreements.

It has signed deals with Japan, New Zealand, Australia, the United States and the European Free Trade Association in the hope of spurring its Southeast Asian neighbours in particular to respond in kind. *Reuters*



AIRLINE ALLIANCE

An alliance between Air France and Dutch airline KLM, amounting to a takeover by the French airline, is to be made official when their boards meet next week, the financial newspaper Agefi reported. AFP

Analysts forecast US economic rebound

WASHINGTON—The US economy, after three years of lackluster growth, is finally poised to begin a sustained rebound that will start to cut the unemployment rate, a national business group predicted Monday.

The National Association for Business Economics, or Nabe, forecast the gross domestic product, the country's total output of goods and services, would grow at a 4.5 percent annual rate in the July-September quarter and at a 4-percent rate in the October-December period.

That forecast, if proven correct, would mark the first time since 1999 that the GDP has been able to grow at a rate of 4 percent or better for two consecutive quarters.

The US economy was first hit by the bursting of the stock market bubble in the spring of 2000 and then by a recession that began in March 2001. Those events were followed by the September 2001 terrorist attacks, corporate accounting scandals and the uncertainty generated by the war in Iraq.

"After wallowing like a dismasted sloop in a storm-tossed sea ... the US economy finally appears to have hoisted its sails," said Duncan Meldrum, president-elect of Nabe and chief economist at Air Products and Chemicals Inc. of Allentown, Pennsylvania.

The new forecast, presented at the Nabe annual convention in Atlanta, was prepared by a panel of 35 professional forecasters drawn from the 2,500-member organization.

The group credited the monetary policy of the Federal Reserve Board, which has pushed the key interest rate it controls down to a 45-year low, and President George W. Bush's third round of tax cuts for providing the push the economy needed.

For the whole year, Nabe projected GDP growth of 2.6 percent this year and 4 percent in 2004. That would be the best showing since the GDP grew by 4.1 percent in 1999 as the country was in the midst of a record 10-year-long economic expansion.

While economic forecasters have projected rebounds for the past three years that have failed to materialize, Meldrum said the Nabe panel believed the optimism now would prove warranted.

"An awful lot of positive stimulus has been put in place both from the tax cuts and the Federal Reserve," he said. Businesses also were finally beginning to step up their own investment spending, which had been a missing ingredient in the recovery, he added.

The Nabe panel said business activity will finally be strong enough to put an end to what so far has been a "jobless" economic recovery.

While the US economy has officially been out of recession since November 2001, companies have continued laying off workers to hold down costs. This year alone, businesses have slashed their payrolls by nearly a half-million workers.

While the layoffs are predicted to stop in the final quarter of this year as businesses begin hiring back workers, the Nabe forecasters didn't expect a rapid decline in the unemployment rate, now at 6.1 percent. *AP*

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Lockheed Martin to buy Titan

NEW YORK—Lockheed Martin Corp., the No. 1 US defense contractor, said on Monday it agreed to buy defense technology company Titan Corp. for about $1.8 billion to expand its homeland security and intelligence businesses.

San Diego-based Titan provides information technology services to the government, specializing in command, control, communications and computers, along with intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

"It's a great match—it's exactly the kind of company we've been looking for," said Lockheed spokesperson Tom Jurkowsky, who added that the acquisition would bring Lockheed new customers from intelligence agencies and the Department of Defense.

The purchase comes at a time when defense contractors are searching for ways to win more government business by expanding their technology, particularly in the communications arena.

Submarine and tank maker General Dynamics Corp., for one, this year paid $1.2 billion to buy homeland security company Veridian Corp.

The Titan deal is valued at about $22 per share, 30 percent more than Titan's closing price of $16.96. The total value of the transaction is $2.4 billion, including the assumption of $580 million of Titan debt, Lockheed said. The Titan purchase is expected to add to Lockheed earnings immediately.

Lockheed, the maker of the Joint Strike Fighter combat plane and commercial satellites, said it will use cash and stock to pay for Titan. Titan shareholders can choose to receive payment in cash or stock, subject to conditions, or a combination of the two.

Lockheed said it expects the deal to close in the first quarter of 2004, pending regulatory approval. The boards of directors of both companies have signed off on the deal, but it still requires approval from Titan shareholders. The transaction is also subject to approval by the justice department and the Pentagon.

Titan and Lockheed already cooperate in the satellite industry, though they do not have significant areas of overlapping businesses. Titan also makes mail-sanitization systems and command vehicles for disaster aid, as well as providing engineering and software development services to the defense department.

Shares of Titan closed at $16.96 on the New York Stock Exchange, down 12 cents, while Bethesda, Maryland-based Lockheed shares closed 14 cents lower at $50.97. *Reuters*

APPP LAUNCHING BOOSTS PROFESSIONALIZATION OF PARALEGALS

The launching of the Association of Philippine Professional Paralegals (APPP) on August 29, 2003, at the Club Filipino with Supreme Court Justice Jose Vitug as Guest of Honor, boosted efforts to accredit and professionalize paralegals in the country.

In his speech as guest speaker, Justice Vitug predicted that "paralegals will play an important, and inevitably soon, an indispensable role in the areas of law and the justice system." He went on to say that, the paralegal study program of the Arellano University, the first and only one of its kind in the country and in the whole of Asia, and the Institute of Continuing Legal Studies and Education, the pioneers in a highly specialized course, is indeed "a timely response to the milieu. I entertain the notion that paralegal is a distinct occupation no less than that of the legal profession."

This supports the statement of Atty Eliseo P. Ocampo, Chairman-Adviser of the Association, that Philippine law practitioners will increasingly learn, as their American counterparts have long ago learned, to fully appreciate the services true paralegals are rendering to help them in their practice and lighten their workload, thereby enabling them to attend to the more substantive aspects of their practice and to accept more clients than they would ordinarily be able to accept in the absence of paralegals.

At present, the only organization in the country offering professional paralegal services to law firms, independent law practioners and the legal departments of public and private entities is the **Paralegal Services Bureau of the Institute of Continuing Legal Studies and Education** located at the 2nd floor of the Ocampo Heritage Building at 214 Wilson Street, Greenhills, San Juan, MM.

The Bureau is concentrating its services in the following areas where they count most: ***shepardized legal research, case briefing (identification of the issues and evaluation of the evidence and the applicable provisions of law and jurisprudence), and drafting of major court pleadings.*** Since it started offering its services a month ago, independent law practitioners all over the country have increasingly been seeking the Bureau's help.

More information about the Paralegal Academic Program of Arellano University or the Paralegal Services Bureau may be obtained by contacting the College of Commerce of the University or by visiting the Bureau's website www.paralegalbureau.org or its office or getting in touch with the Bureau by telefax nos. 721-3470, 724-0595 or 721-3459, by email: info@paralegalbureau.org or by ordinary mail.

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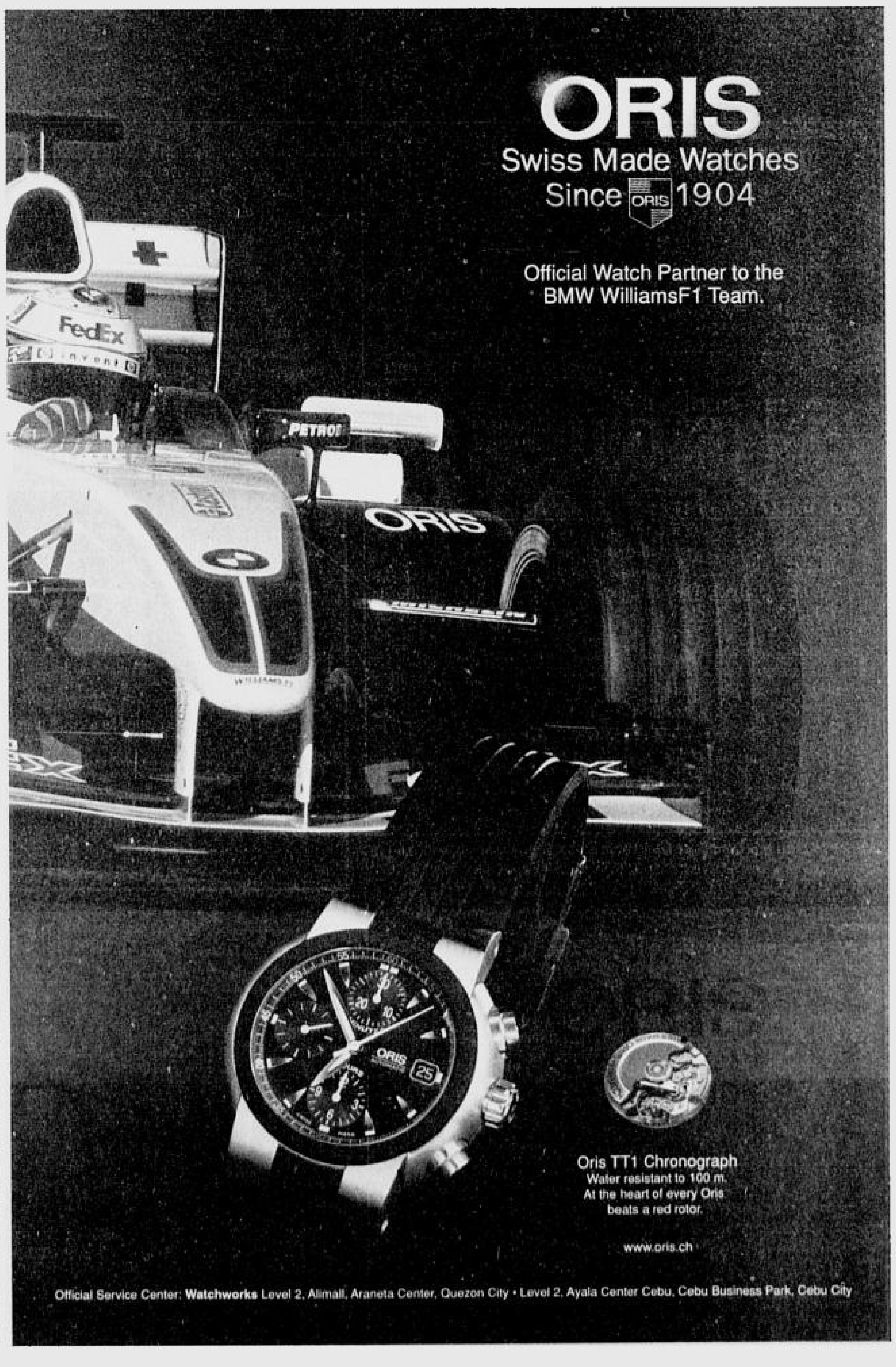

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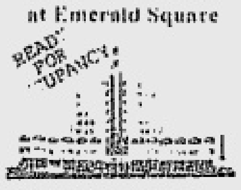

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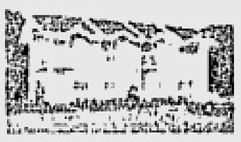

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BCDA

BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS
ASSET DISPOSITION PROGRAM – PHASE 2

The Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) is inviting interested proponents to participate in Phase 2 of BCDA's Asset Disposition Program (ADB Phase 2). ADP Phase 2 involves the development and privatization of the following BCDA properties:

- Approximately 4 hectares North Bonifacio lots located in Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila near the Manila Japanese School, British School and International School Manila; and
- Approximately five (5) hectares located at the former Camp Bago Bantay, Brgy. Sto. Cristo, Bago Bantay, Quezon City between SM City Annex and Mindanao Avenue.

Interested proponents may submit their Letters of Interest to BCDA and can purchase the Terms of Reference (TOR) for ADP Phase 2 that outlines, among others, the requirements for proponents interested to participate in the privatization

BCDA is finalizing the metes and bounds of these properties with another government agency. BCDA shall make ready for distribution the TORs for the bidding of the above properties as soon as the metes and bounds are determined. The TORs will be available at a non-refundable cost of Ten Thousand Pesos (Php 10,000.00) for each TOR at the BCDA office, payable to BCDA in Cash or Manager's Check.

A pre-qualification conference among interested proponents shall be announced. The objective of the pre-qualification conference is to discuss the properties, the TORs and other issues that may be raised by interested proponents.

Interested proponents can direct their inquiries to Ms. Aileen An R. Zosa or Ms. Bambie L. Andal at telephone numbers 510-0420 or 510-0411 or at arzosa@bcda.gov.ph or blandal@bcda.gov.ph.

(Sgd.) RUFO COLAYCO
President and Chief Executive Officer

(PDI – Sept. 17 & 24, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Occidental Mindoro
MUNICIPALITY OF CALINTAAN

September 1, 2003

INVITATION TO BID

The Municipal Government of Calintaan invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the following projects:

Description of the project: Construction of Public Market

ITEM NO.	SCOPE OF WORK	QUANTITY	UNIT
I	Layout and Excavation	LS	
II	Reinforced Concrete Works	LS	
III	Masonry Works	LS	
IV	Roofing Works	LS	
V	Water Supply	LS	

The CONTRACTORS shall generally consist of supply of all materials, labor, tools equipment and supervision required to complete the project in strict compliance with the approved plans and specifications

Minimum Bid Security	2.5% of Bid Amount
Bid Closing Date	September 30, 2003
Calendar Days	120 C.D.

The BAC-LGU reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assume no obligation whatsoever to compensate indemnity to the contractor/bidder for any expense that they incur in the preparation of bid to accept the bid lowest evaluated, responsive and complying bid

(Sgd.) CAROLINA V. AMURAO
MPDC/BAC Chairman

(PDI-Sept. 10 & 17, 2003)

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Join Us in Remembering

DADDY

COL. EDGARDO D. BERNARDO MC (GSC)

TODAY ON HIS 1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY
SEPTEMBER 17, 2003

MASS OFFERINGS

AFPMC Chapel, V. Luna Road, Quezon City	6:30 A.M.
Holy Family Parish, K1st, K7th Sts., Kamias, Quezon City	6:00 A.M. 6:30 P.M.
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Mahinhin St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City	6:00 A.M.
Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage Antipolo Cathedral, Antipolo City	8:00 A.M.
St. Joseph Shrine, Aurora Blvd., Project 3, Quezon City	7:45 A.M. 12:00 N.N.
St. Alphonsus De Liguori, Magallanes, Makati City	6:00 P.M.
Church of St. Margaret of Scotland, 6 Sussex Ave., Morristown, New Jersey	6:30 A.M.
Notre Dame of Mount Carmel Church, Ridgedale Ave., Cedar Knolls, New Jersey	5:00 P.M.
Resurrection Parish 651 - Millbrook Ave., Randolph, New Jersey	9:00 A.M.
St. Matthew Church, Dover-Chester Road, Randolph, New Jersey	8:00 A.M.

"Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..."
Psalm 21:15

FELIPE S. DONATO

of Vigan, Ilocos Sur
Died peacefully on September 15, 2003
at the age of 71.

His loving wife, **Estelita**; children **Hilda, Ely, Lita, Rita** and **Chit**; children-in-law and grandchildren; sisters **Lourdes** and **Hilda**; other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the St. Peter Memorial Chapels, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Friday, September 19, 2003 after the celebration of the Holy Mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
• MESSAGE OF THANKS
• DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS

Power Heads Philippines

Deeply mourns the demise of its

Founder and Chairman

Dante T. Balmes

On September 15, 2003

His bereaved wife : **DR. YOLINDA G. BALMES**

His children : **VANESA AND BENEDICTO E. AQUINO**
KRISTINE AND ANGELITO DONDON A. DIMACUHA
JOSE ANGELO AND MENCHIE MARIE L. TAN
JONATHAN

His grandchildren : **David Angelo**
Jasper Agustine Angelo
Michael Mar Angelo
Nathania Angela
Joshua Santino
Maria Regina

His sister : **ERLINDA T. BALMES**

Request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Basilica of the Immaculate Concepcion, Batangas City.

Interment will follow the 2:00 p.m. Mass on Saturday, September 20, 2003, at the Eternal Gardens Batangas City.

CLASSIFIEDS

LEYTE III ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (LEYECO III)
Tunga, Leyte

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The LEYTE III ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC. invites interested parties to supply
ONE ASSEMBLY 5 MVA ELECTRIC POWER SUBSTATION

A. CIVIL WORKS
SUPPLY OF LABOR & MATERIALS
SCOPE OF WORK:
1. Site Development (Clearing, excavation, backfilling/compacting-400 sqm.
2. Perimeter Fence
3. Guard House
4. Steel Structure (Galvanize) & Concrete Foundation
   - 4.a 69 KV "H" Steel Frame (Galvanize) & Foundation (Footings)
   - 4.b 13.2 KV Steel Structure (Galvanize) & Foundation (Footings)
   - 4.c 69 KV Steel Frame for SF6 & Foundation (Footings)
   - 4.d Transformer pad
   - 4.e 13.2 VCB Steel frame & footings
   - 4.f Concrete Pedestal for 13.2 KV terminating/distribution Feeder
5. Control and Battery Room or Container Van
6. Others

B. MAJOR COMPONENTS OF ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT
SUPPLY OF EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATION

3 units	Surge/Lightning Arresters, outdoor, station class, 60 KV, 10 KA
3 units	69 KV Current Transformer, outdoor, dual core, protection and metering accuracy 150 – 100/50 5A
3 units	69 KV Potential Transformer, 350/600:1
1 set	69 KV, 1250A double side Break Disconnect Switch, 3 pole with motor operated mechanism
1 set	SF6 Circuit Breaker, 69 KV, 1250A, 31.5 KA, outdoor, motor operated with Gas Filling equipment, leakage detector and Maintenance tools (live tank)
1 set	Digital Protective relay, 3 phase protection, with event, fault and disturbance Recording and Auxiliaries SCADA Ready
1 set	5MVA Power transformer, 69/13.800 KV with no load tap changer and complete accessories Pressure relief device with alarm contact Relays with alarm contact Oil level gauge with alarm contact Oil temperature relay with alarm contact
2 sets	Disconnect switch SMD 20-200E (6 Units for FixF2)
3 units	Capacitor 25 K VAR
2 sets	15 KV, 630A, 12.5 KA, 110KV Hil, AC operated with complete Instrumentation, Digital Protective relays and monitoring accessories. 15 KV XLPE Power Cables and others
1 set	substation lighting and power: 10 K VA, 13.2/7620-240/120V fuse cut out surge arrester Substation Grounding System #4/0 Bare copper Wire and Accessories
Others	

Note: Other matters materials/ equipment needed which has not been taken will be discuss during Pre bidding
This is a lease to own scheme project for 5 year (60 months)

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

1. Pre bidding conference	Sept. 16, 2003 at 10:00 am
2. Date of Submission	
a) Pre qualification requirements	Sept. 22, 2003 until 4:00 pm
b) Technical & financial report	Sept. 25, 2003 at 9:00 am
3. Opening of Bids	Sept. 25, 2003 at 11:00 am

LEYECO III reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids if the committee find irregularities and assume no obligation to any expenses incurred by prospective bidders and suppliers.

Noted:
(Sgd.) ENGR. EDMUNDO C. SUMAYOD
General Manager

(Sgd.) ENGR. ESTEBAN MANLAPAS
Chairman, Pre-Bids and Award Committee

(PDI–Sept. 17, 18 & 19, 2003)

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
KAGAWARAN NG KATARUNGAN
PANGASIWAAN SA PATALAAN NG LUPAIN
(LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY)
East Avenue cor. NIA Road
Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Registration Authority (LRA) invites all interested Medium "A" contractors, duly registered with the Government-Electronic Procurement System (G-EPS), to participate in the public bidding for the construction of the Proposed Registry of Deeds Building of Batangas Province. The Approved Budget for the Contract to be bid is PESOS THREE MILLION EIGHT HUNDRED SEVENTY FIVE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED TWENTY (P3,875,820.00) and the contract duration shall be for a period of One Hundred Eighty (180) calendar days. The source of funding is SARO No. C-02-06700 dated December 13, 2002.

Interested Contractors shall be required to submit a LETTER OF INTENT, addressed to the Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee for Infrastructure Projects (BAC-Infrastructure), 5th Floor, LRA Building, East Avenue corner NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City with telephone no. 924-47-33 and shall submit for registration a certified true copy of the following documents (originals to be presented for authentication):

a. G-EPS
b. DTI or SEC Registration Certificate
c. Mayor's Permit and Renewal of PCAB Contractor's License as of fiscal year 2003
d. Taxpayer's Identification Number
e. Sworn statement from the prospective bidder that it is not included in the "blacklist" issued by CIAP.

Eligibility Forms can be secured from the BAC-Infrastructure Secretariat, 5th Floor, LRA Building, from **October 02 to 09, 2003**, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS FIVE HUNDRED (P500.00).

Deadline for the submission of eligibility requirements is on **October 17, 2003.** Prospective bidders shall present the original documents of all eligibility requirements for authentication purposes. Eligible parties shall be issued a complete set of Bid Documents on **October 31, 2003** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS THREE THOUSAND (P3,000.00).

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at the LRA, Multi-Purpose Hall, 5th Floor, LRA Building on **November 05, 2003** at 10:00 o'clock a.m.

Sealed bids in two (2) envelopes shall be received and opened at the LRA Multi Purpose Hall on **November 17, 2003** at 10:00 o'clock a.m.

The BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formality in the bids received, and accept such offer that may be considered most advantageous to LRA. The bidder shall bear all costs in the preparation of their bids and the government shall in no case be responsible or liable for their costs regardless of the outcome of the bidding process.

(Sgd.) EDILBERTO R. FELICIANO
Chairman, BAC-Infrastructure

(PDI–Sept. 17, 24 & Oct. 1, 2003)

PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) invites all registered Janitorial Service Providers duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to apply for eligibility screening and bid for janitorial and other support services requirement of PEZA.

Approved Budget Cost = PhP 4,898,498.83

Contract period is for one (1) year.

Eligibility Screening/pre-qualification documents may be secured upon presentation of PEZA Certificate of Registration and payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) from the BAC Secretariat 3/F Almeda Bldg., Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City from September 17 to 30, 2003, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Mondays to Fridays only. Pre-qualification requirements must be submitted to the BAC Secretariat not later than 3:00 p.m. of 10 October 2003. All participating bidders will be informed in writing of their qualification or disqualification.

For this purpose a pre-bid conference will be held on 07 November 2003, 2:00 P.M. at the Social Hall, 6/F Almeda Bldg., Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.

All pre-qualified bidders shall submit their sealed bid proposals in four (4) sets – one (1) original and three (3) copies, accompanied by a bid security equivalent to 2.5% of the total budget cost in the form of a surety bond (valid for 120 days) callable upon demand issued by a surety or insurance company accredited by the Insurance Commission, on or before 10:00 a.m. of 25 November 2003 to the BAC at the Office of the Deputy Director General for Finance & Administration 3/F Almeda Bldg., Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City. The bids shall be opened at 2:00 p.m. on the same date. Late bidders shall not be admitted. Official time shall be the PEZA clock.

PEZA reserves the right to reject any application or all bids or any part thereof, to waive any defect or informality therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids, and will entertain only such bid/s established to be most advantageous to PEZA.

The CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – September 10 & 17, 2003)

NFA-FDC offers training on thermal processes for canned foods

THE FOOD Development Center of the National Food Authority invites technical personnel in food science, food engineering, microbiology and related fields to sign up to a training entitled "Establishment of Thermal Processes for Canned Foods" to be held from September 16-19, 2003 at the FDC, FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.

The training course will cover a 3-hour lecture-discussion, 19 hours of hands-on exercises and demonstrations, a slide presentation and a 2-hour examination to monitor the participants' learning process.

The training aims to upgrade the technical capabilities of the canned food industry and establish adequate thermal processes for anned foods.

The training fee is at P6,500 per participant inclusive of lunches, snacks and a shuttle service to and from the venue. Checks should be made payable to the Food Development Center, National Food Authority.

The FDC dormitory is open to participants who wish to stay at FDC. Rooms for double occupancy are charged at P790 while rooms for single occupancy are charged at P600. All rooms are air-conditioned.

For further inquiries, call Ms. Amelia S. Bautista of the FDC at telephone numbers 838-4014 to 16, 838-4561 and 838-4601, fax numbers 838-4692 and 838-4016 or e-mail the FDC at infofdc@pacific.net.ph.

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PANA
TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

45th Anniversary
Philippine Association of National Advertisers

MESSAGES

MY WARMEST felicitations to the men and women of the Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA) on the occasion of your 45th Anniversary.

I commend your organization for your continuous efforts to professionalize and promote the growth of the advertising industry in our country. The integrity, professionalism and excellence that you have espoused for years and your steadfast dedication to "Truth in Advertising" have brought about greater public confidence in the advertising industry.

Your vital role in stimulating economic activity provides the synergy needed to create a vibrant Philippine business environment. I look forward to your positive contributions as we work together towards achieving our goal of a strong Republic.

MABUHAY!

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines

MY WARMEST felicitations to the Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA) on its 45th year of uplifting the standards and practices of advertising.

I commend this association of distinguished advertisers for its steadfast commitment to promote public confidence through the promotion of truth in advertising and by calling attention to practices that tend to undermine that confidence. Since its establishment in 1958, PANA has metamorphosed into a potent force in the country's economic progress.

Advertising is an essential factor in the marketing of services and goods and, consequently, plays an important factor in the country's economy. PANA, formed by advertisers for advertisers, is the only organization in the country that unites the users of advertising. It has a number of achievements, among them the establishment of the Advertising Board of the Philippines, the Audit Council for print media, as well as organizing the Radio Research Council and Television Research Council.

May this event inspire you to improve your advertising knowledge and level of professionalism. I exhort the members to persevere towards the improvement of national advertising, as this will certainly contribute to the betterment of the nation.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Teofisto T. Guingona Jr.
Vice President
Republic of the Philippines

OUR WARMEST greetings to the Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA) as you celebrate your 45th anniversary today.

It is heartening to note that as an organization representing over 300 company-clients of the advertising industry, PANA has been serving its members as an industry spokesman in advocating self-regulation, in promoting education and training, in liasing and networking with government, and in rallying the collective strength of the industry towards achieving the association's goals.

We take this opportunity to commend PANA for its notable achievements over the past 45 years which include: adoption of the International Code of Advertising Practice and its enforcement among its members, adopting the truth-in-advertising campaign, resolving conflicts on ethical issues and in the removal/revision of controversial/objectionable ads, and in coordinating with government bodies on rules and regulations affecting the industry's operational standards.

We are one with PANA as it pursues its basic principles of upholding the interests of consumers as the primary concern of advertising (and for the interest of the consumer to prevail in case of conflict), and of promoting and protecting public confidence in advertising and advertised goods by preventing or correcting any practice that tend to undermine such confidence. Indeed, this commitment to keep advertising within correct, ethical, professional and wholesome bounds translates to the promotion of consumer welfare.

Through PANA's continuing initiatives, we are confident that what are attractive and noteworthy about the Philippines and the Filipino citizenry would continue to boost investor confidence and enhance the conditions, for business to flourish, while preserving the integral elements of our national identity through values advocacy.

DTI remains committed to help create the conditions for business to flourish and pockets of opportunities for enterprising firms notwithstanding the daunting local, regional, and global challenges. The key to these opportunities lies in effective marketing--to which the advertising industry has much to contribute.

To PANA, our sincere congratulations and best wishes on your 45th anniversary.

Mar Roxas
Secretary
Department of Trade and Industry

THE PHILIPPINE Association of National Advertisers celebrates its 45th year of service to the industry.

It is with great pride that PANA stood by its principle and contributed to the best of its service to the advertising industry. It surpassed all the transition of leaders, all the challenges in the economic scenarios and had grown its membership to more than 300 active companies that are indeed contributors to the economy.

PANA is the backbone and the fuel of the advertising industry. It is through the collective advertising budgets that the advertising industry revolves. It has a very close affiliation with the Advertising Board of the Philippines and its allied associations.

PANA's advocacy for education and academic affiliation grew to the level of Post Studies in Marketing Communications offered by St. Benilde under the PANA-Benilde Studies, its yearly popular implementation of the Marketing Communications Awards supported by top schools in the field of Communications and Marketing and PANA's Educational Seminars where Advertising and Marketing gurus share their expertise to the young marketing practitioners and academe as well.

PANA's roster of members is an epitome of credibility and stability. Past Ad Congresses were successfully implemented with the great support of PANA members through fielding of delegates, volunteerism, active participation in the committees and funding through sponsorships.

Truth in Advertising is PANA's mission for the protection of the consumers. The alliances with industry partners gives strength and meaning to PANA's role in the industry and our country.

With the energetic team of the 2003 PANA Board of Directors and officers several projects were successfully implemented and supported by the hardworking PANA secretariat.

Let a dream be realized that PANA will soon acquire a new home—the PANA Hub—in the heart of Makati, where allied associations, affiliates in academe, media friends, and fellow PANA members will always be welcomed and served.

Jointly with its members, "With One Voice, One Strength, and One Symbol uphold. . ." PANA will remain "The Only Association of National Advertisers."

Cheers to PANA's 45th year celebration!

Carminia "Cya" Rodriguez
PANA President

Nothing beats a united force

By Marlet D. Salazar

ITS NAME has become almost synonymous with the industry it is in. The impact and influence it possesses undoubtedly is already a power in itself. A power that not only protects but upholds the integrity of the advertising world.

The Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA) looks forward to more colorful and productive years ahead. It has achieved the status of being the voice of the many, and promoter of truth in advertising.

Peering into the life of PANA for 45 years will show the united strength it has demonstrated during the most critical times. It has withstood any threat posed by the economic crunch as well as individual issues it met along the way.

Protecting its members

A total of 326 companies give PANA a strong hold in the industry, be it in print or broadcast. And these companies are assured of the protection a united non-profit, non-stock organization like PANA can offer.

When interests of national advertisers are at stake, members can count on PANA to represent them in sectoral or government meetings.

The successful years past would have never been possible without hurdles. PANA boldly met with the legislative and executive departments to discuss proposed measures and rules and regulations that they saw would have affected the interest of the national advertisers. It has solidly opposed several unfavorable legislation that may deter the freedom of the advertising industry.

Likewise, it also had a hand in formulating guidelines for the good of advertising. One of such is the Sales and Promotions Rules which is now being used by the Department of Trade and Industry.

When the drafting of rules on the practice was on the works, PANA worked closely with the government. The said rules are now known as the Adboard Code of Ethics.

The association can be counted on when met by important issues to deal with such as the increase in media rates, protection period for rate announcement, and other business practices. Along with these, PANA was able to negotiate reasonable rate protection, preferential rates, and other concessions from media for its members. It showed a strong opposition to the moves to increase agency commission which might have put a dent to the industry.

Self-regulation to uphold integrity

To maintain the standard of excellence among members, PANA constantly holds seminars, workshops and open forum discussions with other groups. These activities serve as a perfect means for the members to trade ideas and experiences to broaden their understanding of the advertising business, as well as raise the level of professionalism among the players.

PANA, with all the influence it has, knows its limits. It puts premium in the interests of the consumers and the integrity of the industry. Proof of which is it being the first organization to adopt the International Code of Advertising Practice and immediately enforced it to members. This is what the "truth in advertising" is all about.

One of its strongest points is forging a healthy relationship with other sectors like the 4As, ASAP, CAAP, IBA, KBP, Mores, OAAP, and Primo, which is now known as UPMG (United Print Media Group) when it merged with Prado.

PANA serves as a perfect venue for the members to forge professional relationships and build a network of contacts with media and various advertising agencies.

Not to forget is the role PANA played in instituting the Advertising Board of the Philippines and the Audit Council for print media.

PANA exists not only to protect its members and the industry, it also hopes to serve the consumers and the public. It aims to ensure that all the advertising produced by the members are truthful, not misleading, and is done in good taste.

Because it values the name and position it holds, PANA is aware that nothing can beat self-regulation. To achieve this, the association has adopted the Code of Ethics, Rules and Regulations for Advertising, and Sales Promotions of the Advertising Board of the Philippines.

Ultimately, PANA represents advertising as a legitimate business expense, which is also an essential factor in the marketing services and goods. One or the other PANA helps in bringing life to the country's economy.

PANA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Nestlé Philippines Inc.

Angelica P. Suiza
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Adidas Philippines Inc.

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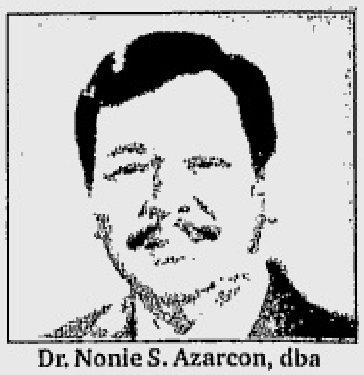
Superferry



Dr. Nonie S. Azarcon, dba
Executive Director
PANA

Empowering the advertising industry

PHOTO shows winners of Strat Ur Stuff marketing summit with Inquirer chair Marixi Prieto, Susan Dimacali, Gigi Rodriguez and Bobby Banaag.

PANA officers and Board of Directors present a plaque of appreciation to Sandy Prieto, Philippine Daily Inquirer president, as sponsor for the Aug. 29 Fellowship Night.

SHOWN (from left) are Cerge Remonde, KBP chair; Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, Inquirer president; Rene Reinoso, Inquirer's SVP for sales and marketing; Pepito Olarte, Inquirer's vice president for advertising.

THE VALUE and power of advertising cannot be denied in this day and age. Marketing has become an effective tool in reaching out to consumers. It is in this concept that the Philippine Association of National Advertisers PANA) hopes to even raise further the quality of advertising as it has done so in the past.

Being the prime mover of the advertising industry, it has done a tremendous job in upholding the integrity of the industry in the past 45 years.

Leading a group as diverse as this is not an easy job. But PANA displayed its strong leadership when it weathered the storms in the past.

The movements of members and suppliers depend on the movements of PANA.

The people behind the success of PANA ensure that the next crop of marketing practitioners would continue to lead and uphold the integrity of the industry through the seminars and projects it regularly conducts throughout its 45 years.

In partnership with the De La Salle University-College of Saint Benilde, PANA offers a Diploma Program in Marketing Communications. This Post Baccalaureate program is a series of certificate courses intended for business practitioners. Marketing professionals and experts update the students on the best business practices, share new ideas, and strengthen their competencies in the field.

Participants get updates on new ideas on Market Research and Media Planning, Building the Brand, PR and Advocacy Marketing, and Integrated Marketing Communications.

Recently, it initiated a project called Tour of Schools. The lectures and seminars are all about the Integrated Marketing Communications which also covered topics in Advertising, Public Relations, Sales Promotions, Events Marketing, and Salesmanship.

Last year PANA successfully held the Strategic Marketing Summit which carried the theme "Strat ur Stuff." One of the topics discussed was brand building and management which has become the trend in the industry today.

Another project that again involved schools and education was a symposium dubbed Oplan Schools, which tackled anything and everything about marketing: from research, product planning and development, production, storage and warehousing, and distribution.

The most recent among the many successful projects PANA has initiated was its first seminar for this year with the theme "The Changing Media Landscape."

It offered "vital insights into ways of effectively and efficiently reaching consumers considering audience fragmentation, the evolution of traditional media, and the emergence of new media options."

It was attended by the industry experts from various member companies, media, the academe and members of the Advertising Board of the Philippines.

PANA also recognizes marketing experts who are dedicated and shares their view of making the advertising world more competitive. It recently sponsored a Junior Achievement of the Philippines' Marketing Executive of the Year Awards.

These are just a few of the many efforts PANA initiated for the industry it is leading. As the association celebrates its 45 years of promoting truth in advertising, it also prepares itself for the challenges and success ahead.

PANA Past Presidents

Anacleto T. del Rosario - 1958
Del Rosario Bros. Inc.
Richard M. Bownass - 1959
International Harvester of the Phils.
Benjamin C. Osias - 1960
Shell Co. of the Phils. Ltd.
Manuel Ylanan - 1961
Phil. Manufacturing Co.
Hendrik G. Njik - 1962
Phil. Refining Co.
Marvin Larsen - 1963
Coca-Cola Export Corp.
James C. Brambles - 1964
Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.
Gustavo R. Gonzalez - 1965
Commonwealth Foods Inc.
Greg R. Perez - 1966
Northern Motors Inc.
Greg R. Perez - 1967
Northern Motors Inc.
Robert Sehwani - 1968
Sehwani Marketing Corp.
Gustavo R. Gonzalez - 1969
Commonwealth Foods Inc.
Francisco R. Floro- 1970
Floro Enterprises
Alfredo C. Antonion - 1971
Procter & Gamble PMC
Oscar T. Valenzuela - 1972
Sta. Clara Lumber Co.
Francisco R. Floro - 1973
Floro Enterprises Inc.
Gregorio D. Garcia III - 1974
Banco Filipino
Marcial S. Carrion - 1975
San Miguel Corp.

PRESIDENTS/ B10

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Streetscape at the
Shangri-La Plaza
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5. ADIDAS PHILIPPINES, INC.
6. ADP INDUSTRIES CORPORATION
7. AGUA VIDA SYSTEMS, INC.
8. AIRFREIGHT 2100, INC.
9. AJINOMOTO PHILIPPINES
10. ALASKA MILK CORPORATION
11. ALCATEL PHILIPPINES, INC.
12. ALLIED DOMECQ PHILIPPINES, INC.
13. ALTERNATIVE BEVERAGES CO., INC.
14. AMA GROUP OF COMPANIES
15. AMALGAMATED SPECIALTIES CORP
16. AMERICAN EXPRESS BANK PHILS. (SAVINGS BANK, INC.)
17. AMERICAN STANDARD
18. ANSON EMPORIUM
19. ARANETA CENTER, INC.
20. ARCON GROUP HOLDINGS (DAYS HOTEL)
21. ASIA BREWERY, INC.
22. ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC.
23. ASIATRUST BANK
24. AVESCO MARKETING CORPORATION
25. AVON COSMETICS, INC.
26. AYALA CORPORATION
27. AYALA LAND, INC.
28. BAGUMBUHAY INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION
29 BAN KEE TRADING, INC.
30 BANK OF COMMERCE
31. BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
32 BAYANTEL
33 BPI FAMILY BANK
34 BASIC CLOTHING INT'L. MFTG. (COLOURS)
35. BAYER PHILIPPINES, INC.
36. BIG "E" FOODS CORPORATION
37. BOEHRINGER-INGELHEIM PHILIPPINES, INC.
38 BRISTOL-MYERS SQUIBB (PHIL.), INC.
39. BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO PHILIPPINES
40. BURGER MACHINE HOLDINGS CORPORATION
41. BURLINGTON INDUSTRIES PHILS., INC.
42. CABLE TECHNOLOGY ASIA CORP. (STAR GROUP LTD. PHILS.
43. CADBURY CONFECTIONARY PHILIPPINE BRANCH
44. CALIFORNIA MANUFACTURING CORP
45. CAMPBELL SOUP ASIA LIMITED
46. CANON MARKETING (PHILIPPINES), INC.
47. CARGILL PHILS., INC. (FORMERLY AGRI-BRANDS)
48. CASTROL PHILIPPINES
49. CATHAY BUILDER'S CENTER, INC.
50. CDO FOODSPHERE, INC.
51. CEBU PACIFIC AIR
52. CENTURY CANNING CORPORATION
53. CHANEL MANUFACTURING CORPORATION
54 CHINA BANKING CORPORATION
55. CHOWKING FOOD CORPORATION
56. CITIBANK, N.A.
57. CITIBEDS
58. CLOROX INTERNATIONAL PHILS., INC.
59. COCA-COLA EXPORT CORPORATION
60. COLGATE-PALMOLIVE PHILS., INC.
61. COLLEGE ASSURANCE PLAN PHILS., INC.
62. COLLINS INTERNATIONAL TRADING CORP
63. COLUMBIAN AUTOCAR CORPORATION
64. COMMONWEALTH FOODS, INC.
65. CONCEPCION CARRIER AIRCONDITIONING CO.
66. CONSOLIDATED DAIRY & FROZEN FOOD CORP
67. CONTINENTAL AIRLINES
68. CROSSINGS DEPARTMENT STORE
69. DAIKIN-ALEN AIRCONDITIONING, INC.
70. DAVID SALONS, INC.
71. DEL MONTE PHILIPPINES, INC.
72. DHL WORLDWIDE EXPRESS (PHILS.), CORP
73. DIAMOND LABORATORIES, INC.
74. DIRECT LINK INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.
75. DIRECTORIES PHILS. CORPORATION
76. DKT PHILIPPINES, INC.
77. DOLE PHILIPPINES, INC.
78. DUMEX PHILIPPINES, INC.
79. DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO MANILA
80. EASTERN TELECOMS PHILS., INC.
81. EAST WEST BANK
82. EINSCO CO., INC.
83. ELECTROGROUP INC.
84. ELECTROLUX PHILIPPINES, INC.
85. EMPIRE EAST LAND HOLDINGS, INC.
86. ENCHANTED KINGDOM, INC.
87. ENERGIZER PHILIPPINES, INC.
88. ENERGY FOOD & DRINKS, INC.
89. EQUITABLE CARDNETWORK, INC.
90 EQUITABLE PCI BANK
91. ERICSSON TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC.
92. EVER EMPORIUM
93. EVERGOOD UNLIMITED CORPORATION
94. EXCELLENCE APPLIANCE TECHNOLOGIES
95. EXXON MOBIL PETROLEUM & CHEMICAL HOLDINGS, INC.
96. FABRIANO S.PA., INC.
97. FEDERAL LAND, INC.
98. FESTIVAL SUPERMALL, INC.
99. FIL-PACIFIC APPAREL CORP (MG JEANS)
100. FILCON MANUFACTURING CORPORATION
101. FIRST e-BANK
102. FOCUS GLOBAL, INC.
103. FOOD INDUSTRIES, INC.
104 FORD MOTOR COMPANY PHILIPPINES, INC.
105 FORTUNE TOBACCO CORPORATION
106. FUJITSU PHILIPPINES, INC.
107. GANDOUR PHILIPPINES, INC.
108. GARDENIA BAKERIES (PHILS.), INC.
109. GENERAL GARMENTS CORPORATION
110. GENERAL MILLING CORPORATION
111. GENERAL MOTORS AUTOMOBILES PHILS., INC.
112. GETZ BROS. PHILIPPINES, INC.
113 GIFT GATE, INC.
114. GILLETTE PHILIPPINES, INC.
115. GINEBRA SAN MIGUEL, INC.
116. GLAXOSMITHKLINE
117. GLOBAL BRANDS
118. GLOBE TELECOM
119 GODIVA, INC.
120. GOLD'S GYM
121. GOLDEN ABC INC. (PENSHOPPE)
122. GOLDEN DONUTS, INC. (DUNKIN DONUTS)
123. GOLDILOCKS BAKESHOPS, INC.
124. GOODYEAR PHILIPPINES, INC.
125 GREAT PACIFIC LIFE ASSURANCE CORP
126. GREENWICH PIZZA CORPORATION
127. GTVL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES, INC.
128 HEALTHY OPTIONS
129. HERBCARE CORPORATION
130. HOLLYWOOD MARKETING
131. HOME DEVT. MUTUAL FUND (PAG-IBIG)
132. HONDA PHILIPPINES, INC.
133. HYATT REGENCY MANILA
134 IBM PHILIPPINES, INC.
135 INGAME.COM, INC.
136 INBISCO PHILIPPINES, INC.
137. INTEL MICROELECTRONICS
138. INTL. CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS (ICS)
139. INTL. DISTILLERS PHILS., INC.
140. INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SPECIALISTS
141. INTL. FAMILY FOOD SERVICES, INC. (SHAKEYS)
142. INTL. PHARMACEUTICAL, INC.
143. ISLAND BISCUITS, INC.
144. JAMES HARDIE PHILIPPINES, INC.
145. JARDINE DAVIES, INC.
146. JDH-PHILS. INC. ZUELLIG (FORMERLY ZUELLIG INCHCAPE)
147. JOHN HANCOCK LIFE INSURANCE

MEMBERS/B11

PANA Past Presidents

From page B9

Vicente C. Dinglasan - 1976
Philippine Refining Co.
Lamberto J.V. Tajonera - 1977
S.C. Johnson & Son Inc.
Santiago D. Olbes - 1978
Carnation Philippines Inc.
Gatt P. Magay - 1979
Colgate-Palmolive Phils.
Manuel S. Urbano III - 1980
Scott Paper Phils. Inc.
Lourdes M. Fajardo - 1981
Liberty Commodities Inc.
Oscar T. Valenzuela - 1982
Bank of the Philippine Island
Manuel P. Quiogue - 1983
Jourdan Et Cie Cor.
Stella S. Villegas - 1984
Floro Enterprises Inc.
Roberto H. Sumulong - 1985
Jollibee Foods Corp.
Carlos Q. Carballo Jr. - 1986
Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.
Divino M. Villanueva Jr. - 1987
Nicolas Kiwi Phils. Inc.
Marcial S. Carrion - 1988
San Miguel Corp.
Reynaldo G. Icasas - 1989
Avon Products Mftg. Inc.
Marcial S. Carrion - 1990
San Miguel Corp.
Roberto H. Sumulong - 1991
Jollibee Foods Corp.
Winston A. Marbella - 1992
Magnolia Corp.
Felicitas G. del Rosario - 1993
Philippine National Bank
Divino M. Villanueva Jr. - 1994
Golden Arches Development Corp.
Antonio V. Concepcion - 1995
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.
Benjamin s. Bautista - 1996
Monsanto Phils. Inc.
A.G. Alcantara Jr. - 1997
Asia Brewery Inc.
A.G. Alcantara Jr. - 1998
Asia Brewery Inc.
Gabriel Alfonso Mathay - 1999
Petron Corp.
Angelica P. Suiza - 2000
Golden ABC Inc.
Angelica P. Suiza - 2001
Golden ABC Inc.
Carminia B. Rodriguez
Citibank N.A. - 2002

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sa puso at diwa ng Pilipino...

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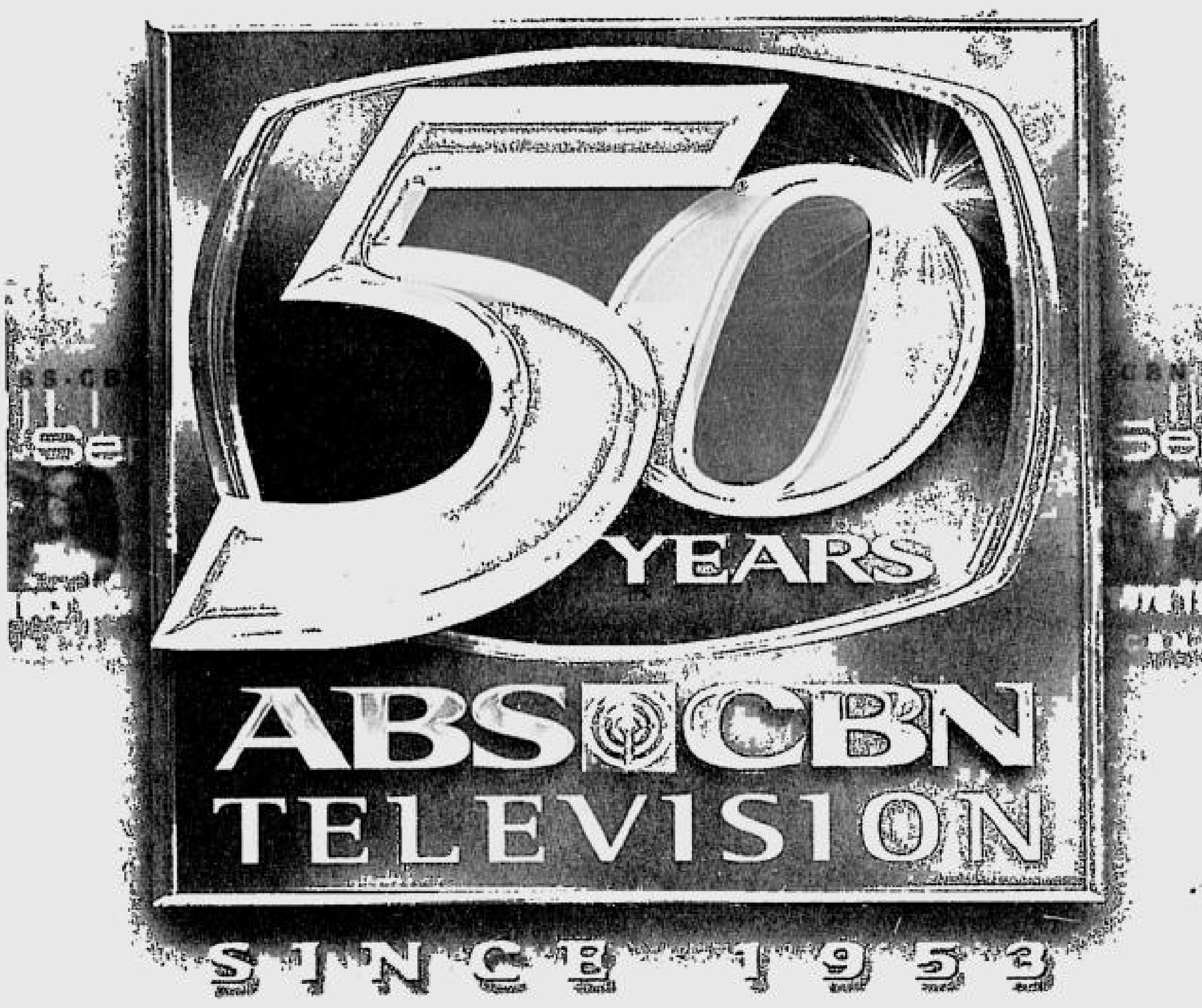

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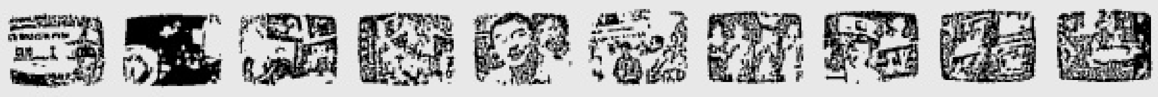

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From page B10

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149. JOLLIBEE FOODS CORPORATION
150. JULIE'S BAKESHOP INC.
151. KIMBERLY-CLARK PHILIPPINES, INC.
152. KODAK PHILIPPINES LTD.
153. KOLIN PHILIPPINES INT'L., INC.
154. KRAFT FOODS PHILIPPINES, INC.
155. LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
156. LESLIE CORPORATION
157. LEVI STRAUSS PHILIPPINES, INC. II
158. LIBERTY COMMODITIES CORPORATION
159. LINEA ITALIA GROUP
160. LKG INVESTMENT & FINANCE CORP.(LKG GROUP)
161. LOYOLA PLANS CONSOLIDATED, INC.
162. LUCERNE JEWELERS
163. LYNCOR, INC. (BAYO)
164. LYRIC PIANO & ORGAN CORPORATION
165. MACLIN ELECTRONICS, INC
166. MAGNOLIA, INC.
167. MANDARIN ORIENTAL MANILA
168. MANILA PAVILION HOTEL
169. MANUELA CORPORATION
170. MARIE-FRANCE BODYLINE INT'L., INC.
171. MCDONALDS PHILIPPINES
172. MEGA FISHING CORPORATION
173. MEGA PHILIPPINES
174. MERCURY DRUG CORPORATION
175. METCHEM INDUSTRIAL, INC.
176. METRO PHARMA PHILIPPINES, INC.
177. METROBANK CARD CORPORATION
178. METROPOLITAN BANK & TRUST COMPANY
179. MGME MARKETING CORPORATION
180. MITSUBISHI MOTORS PHILIPPINES CORP.
181. MONDE DENMARK NISSIN BISCUIT CORP.
182. MONTEREY FOODS CORPORATION
183. MOTOROLA COMMUNICATIONS PHILS., INC.
184. MSI DIGILAND (PHILS.), INC.
185. MYRA PHARMACEUTICALS, INC
186. NATIONAL BOOKSTORE, INC.
187. NATIONAL PANASONIC SALES PHILS. (DIV. OF MEPCO)
188. NESTLE PHILIPPINES, INC.
189. NEW BRENDs INT'L. CORPORATION
190. NEW ZEALAND MILK PRODUCTS, PHILS., INC.
191. NEXTEL COMMUNICATIONS PHILS., INC.
192. NIKE PHILIPPINES, INC.
193. NIPPON LIFE INSURANCE CO. OF THE PHILS.
194. NISSAN MOTOR PHILIPPINES, INC.
195. NOKIA PHILIPPINES, INC.
196. NOVARTIS HEALTHCARE PHILS., INC.
197. NUTRIASIA
198. OTT LOUIE PHILS., INC
199. PACIFIC PLANS, INC.
200. PASCUAL LABORATORIES, INC.
201. PEPSICO, INC. (PHIL. BRANCH)
202. PERFETTI VAN MELLE (PHILS.), INC.
203. PERFUMERIA ESPAÑOLA CORPORATION
204. PETRON CORPORATION
205. PFIZER, INC.
206. PHILAM PLANS, INC.
207. PHILIP MORRIS PHILIPPINES, INC.
208. PHILIPPINE AIRLINES, INC.
209. PHILIPPINE AXA LIFE INSURANCE CORP.
210. PHIL. LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE COMPANY
211. PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK
212. PHILIPPINE PIZZA, INC.
213. PHILIPPINE SAVINGS BANK
214. PHILIPPINE SEVEN CORPORATION
215. PHILIPS CONSUMER ELECTRONICS
216. PHILUSA CORPORATION
217. PHOTOKINA MARKETING CORPORATION
218. PILIPINAS SHELL PETROLEUM CORP.
219. PLANTERS BANK
220. PROCTER & GAMBLE DISTRIBUTING PHILS., INC.
221. PRU LIFE INSURANCE OF U.K.
222. QUAKER OATS ASIA, INC. (PHIL. BRANCH)
223. RECKITT BENCKISER (PHILS.), INC
224. REGENT FOOD CORPORATION
225. REPUBLIC BISCUIT CORP. (REBISCO GROUP)
226. REPUBLIC CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES, INC.
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229. RIZAL COMMERCIAL BANKING CORPORATION
230. ROBERT BOSCH, INC.
231. ROEHR CORPORATION
232. ROGEMSON ENTERPRISES (The Rogemson Co.
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234. SALEM OCEANIC INDUSTRIES CORP.
235. SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS PHILS., CORP.
236. SAN MIGUEL BREWING GROUP
237. SANOFI -SYNTHELABO PHILIPPINES
238. SANYO (PHILS.), INC.
239. SARA LEE PHILIPPINES, INC.
240. SCHERING-PLOUGH CORPORATION
241. SCA HYGIENCE PRODUCTS CORPORATION
242. S.C. JOHNSON & SON, INC.
243. SECURITY BANK CORPORATION
244. SECURITY DINERS INTERNATIONAL CORP.
245. SHANGRI-LA PLAZA CORPORATION
246. SHARP (PHILS.), CORP.
247. SHOEMAKER'S SHOP INC. (HUSH PUPPIES)
248. SHOPPING CENTER MANAGEMENT CORP. (SCMC)
249. SIAM MARIWASA TOTO, INC.
250. SIEMENS, INC.
251. SLIMMERS WORLD INTERNATIONAL
252. SM, INC.
253. SMART COMMUNICATIONS, INC.
254. SMARTY TOYS CORPORATION
255. SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
256. SOLID DISTRIBUTORS, INC
257. SONY PHILIPPINES, INC.
258. SPLASH CORPORATION
259. STA. LUCIA EAST GRAND MALL
260. STANDARD CHARTERED BANK
261. STERLING PAPER PRODUCTS ENT., INC.
262. STIEFEL PHILIPPINES, INC.
263. SUGARLAND BEVERAGE CORP.
264. SUNLIFE ASSURANCE CO. OF CANADA
265. SUPERFERRY
266. SUPER MANUFACTURING CORPORATION
267. SUY SING COMMERCIAL CORPORATION
268. SUYEN CORPORATION
269. SWEDISH MATCH PHILIPPINES, INC.
270. SYSTEM TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE (STI)
271. SYSU INTERNATIONAL, INC.
272. TAISHO PHARMA (PHILS.) INC.
273. THE ANDRESONS GROUP INC.
274. THE BOOTS CO. (PHILS.) INC.
275. THE HERITAGE HOTEL MANILA
276. THE HONGKONG & SHANGHAI BANKING CORP.
277. THE INSULAR LIFE ASSURANCE CO., LTD.
278. THE LANDMARK CORPORATION
279. THE PENINSULA MANILA
280. THE PHIL. AMERICAN LIFE AND GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY (PHILAMLIFE)
281. THE PUREFOODS -HORMEL COMPANY
282. THE WESTIN PHILIPPINE PLAZA
283. TOTAL (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION
284. TOURIST TRADE & TRAVEL CORPORATION
285. TOYOTA MOTOR PHILIPPINES, CORP.
286. TRANSUNION CORP. (FEDERAL ELECTRIC)
287. TRI-UNION INTERNATIONAL CORP.(CO. B)
288. TRICOM DYNAMICS, INC.
289. TUPPERWARE PHILIPPINES
290. TVP DENTAL B CORPORATION
291. T.W. AND COMPANY
292. UNI-AIR PHILIPPINES, INC
293. UNILAB NUTRITIONALS (FORMERLY PHIL. HEALTH)
294. UNILEVER PHILIPPINES, INC.
295. UNION BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
296. UNITED INT'L. PICTURES, INC.
297. UNITED LABORATORIES, INC. (UNILAB)
298. UNITED OVERSEAS BANK PHILIPPINES
299. UNI-TRADE MERCHANDISING
300. UNIVERSAL ROBINA CORPORATION
301. UNIVET AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, INC.
302. VIP GROUP OF COMPANIES
303. VIBELLE MFTG. CORP. & ORIANA MFTG. CO., INC.
304. VIRGINIA FOOD, INC.
305. VIVA ENTERTAINMENT GROUP
306. WARNER MANUFACTURING CORP.
307. WESPHIL CORPORATION (WENDY'S)
308. WESTERN MARKETING CORPORATION
309. WIDE WIDE WORLD EXPRESS CORP.
310. WRIGLEY PHILIPPINES, INC.
311. WYETH CONSUMER HEALTHCARE
312. WYETH PHILIPPINES, INC.
313. YAKULT PHILIPPINES, INC
314. ZENCO SALES, INC.
315. ZEST-O CORPORATION (SEMEXCO)

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2. BELO MEDICAL GROUP
3. BLUE CROSS INSURANCE, INC
4. CALTEX PHILIPPINES, INC
5. COLUMBIA PICTURES INDUSTRIES, INC.
6. FIRST ASIA MOBILE, INC
7. HEWLETT-PACKARD PHILS. CORPORATION
8. HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES, INC
9. HYUNDAI ASIA RESOURCES, INC.
10. INFORMATICS PHILIPPINES
11. JMC CLOTHING, INC. (FORMERLY J-SING BROS)
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13. MASTERCARD INT'L. PHILS., INC
14. MAVERICK FILMS
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22. RED RIBBON FOODS CORPORATION
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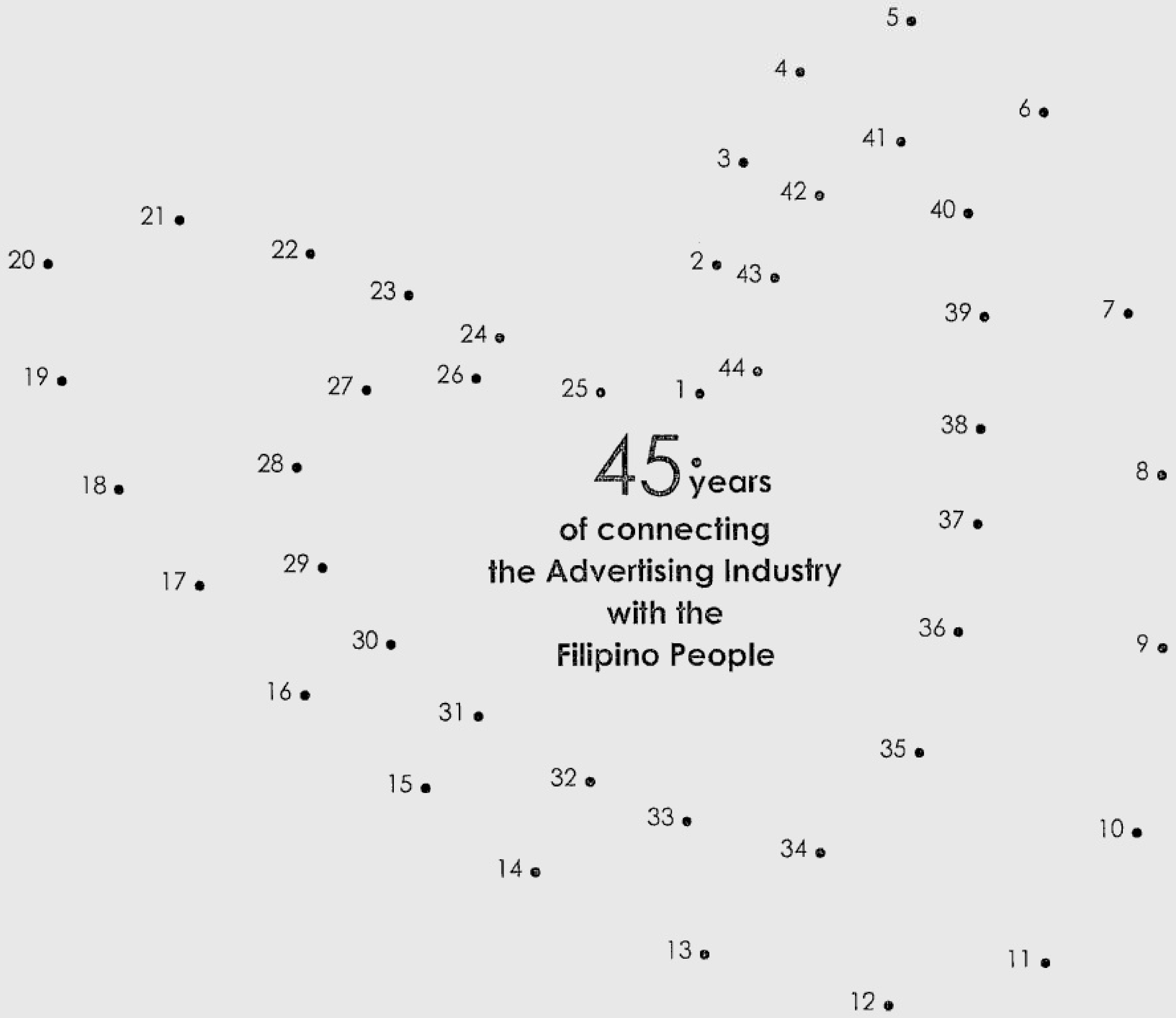

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INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on September 30, 2003, 2:00 p.m. at the DBP Head Office Auditorium, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City for the following properties on CASH BASIS:

CODE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM BID (Excl. of VAT)
REAL ESTATE			
MANILA			
AMD-ML-60A	No. 15 Highland Drive, Blue Ridge Subd., Quezon City	858.8 m² residential lot (TCT No. N-251920) with building & improvements	P 11,912,300.00
AMD-ML-60B	No. 4 Crestline Road, Blue Ridge Subd., Quezon City	835.5 m² residential lot (TCT No. N-251919) with building & improvements	P 10,979,200.00
BAC-2K3-9-01	Interior Maytubig St., San Rafael District, Pasay City	405.4 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-143002, Lot 2247-A-9)	P 8,108,000.00
BAC-2K3-9-02	- do -	398.3 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-143001, Lot 2247-A-10)	P 7,966,000.00
BAC-2K3-9-03	- do -	327.2 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-143000, Lot 2247-A-8)	P 6,544,000.00
AMD-EL-61	No. 38 Road 7, Project 6, Quezon City	403 m² residential lot (TCT No. N-234441) with building & improvements	6,708,800.00
AMD-ED-62	No. 7 Calle Azul, Tierra Hermosa II, BF Exec. Homes, Almanza Uno, Las Piñas City	288 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-70413) with building & improvements	P 1,133,700.00
AMD-ED-63	Interior Suter St., Sta. Ana	124 m² residential lot (TCT No. 156194)	674,600.00
AMD-EL-64	Lot 1 Blk. 18, cor. Lots 13 & 19 Golden Acres Subd., Talon Singko, Las Piñas City	236 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-75802)	472,000.00
BATANGAS			
DAS-004	San Vicente, Sto. Tomas	2 parcels of interior industrial lots (TCT No. T-95547) total area of 7,078 m² with warehouse buildings & improvements	P 9,829,200.00
BULACAN			
AMD-ML-65	Bgy. Lambakin, San Miguel	40,000 m² agricultural lot (TCT No. T-138507) w/ poultry bldgs. & imprvts.	P 8,412,840.00
AMD-ML-66	No. 78 Dr. Teofilo Santiago St., Poblacion, Sta. Maria	250 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-18584 M) with building & improvements	2,671,600.00
AMD-ED-67	No. 402 Bo. Tangos, Baliwag	240 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-128269) with building & improvements	331,600.00
CAVITE			
AMD-ML-68	Greenbreeze Subd., Bo. Lancaan, Dasmariñas	200 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. T-979115)	234,000.00
LAGUNA			
AMD-EL-69	Bgy. Road, Bgy. San Isidro Calauan	500 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-207251)	540,000.00
RIZAL			
AMD-ED-70	C. Lawis Ext., Bgy. San Luis, Antipolo City	1,377 m² industrial-residential lot (TCT No. R-14327) w/ factory / office bldg.	P 10,105,000.00
LJG-142	Lot 31 Blk. 14, Montano Drive, Palos Verdes Garden Heights Subd., Bo. Seven Hills, Antipolo City	300 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. 301965)	760,000.00
CHATTELS (sale on "as-is, where-is" basis)			
AMD-EL-71	TMEC Cmpd., Bgy. Alangilan, Batangas City	7 units various marble-making machinery & equipment	P 598,000.00 to 16,670,000.00
AMD-ML-72	DBP Depot, Doña Severina Subd., Parañaque City	1 unit pad printing machine	P 28,800.00

BIDDERS ARE REMINDED:

1. To inspect the properties to determine their actual condition before the bidding.
2. To submit in DBP's official bid form available at the AMD-Acquired Assets, 2nd Floor, DBP Head Office during office hours; and
3. To be on time. No bids will be accepted once unsealing of the bids commences. The sale shall be subject to other terms and conditions which may be imposed by the Bank.

DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING.

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(PDI – September 16 & 17, 2003)

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ERRATUM

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(PDI-Sept. 17, 2003)

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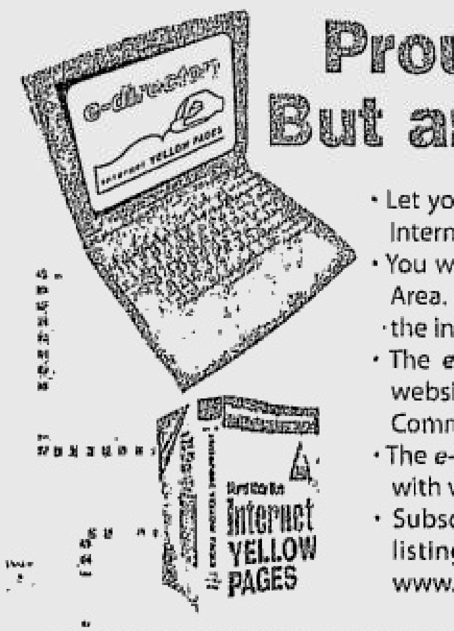

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Pinay entrepreneur and her *adobo* find place in Oregon sun

By Ysabel San Pedro-Schuld

CAREER TALES

MAGGIE Mora of Olongapo City recalls tagging along with her grandparents to sell vegetables and fish at the cockpit when she was five years old. This episode in her life planted the seeds of her dream to be an entrepreneur one day. This seed grew as she got older. While in elementary and high school, Maggie sold candies to her classmates. The eldest of three siblings, she recalls dreaming of having her own store someday.

Proud owner

Today, she is known as Maggie Armstrong, having married an American naval officer, and living her dream in Portland, Oregon, USA. She owns and manages a restaurant named Maggie's Place and Teriyaki Restaurant situated along SE 72nd Ave across Flavel St. near the town's convenience grocery store, the "Red Apple Market," contiguous to the main shopping center in Clackamas Town Center.

She has about five Filipino staff in the restaurant serving various Pinoy delicacies like *pancit, lumpia, dinuguan, lechon,* pork *adobo, pusit* and *palitaw,* among others.

Aside from Pinoy food, Maggie also has an Oriental store named Philippine Oriental Food and Gifts situated in NE 82nd Ave across the NE Tillamook cross street which is half a mile north of the Portland International Airport. There, she also provides food for the soul to her Filipino countrymen. She rents out Tagalog VHS and VCD tapes. She gets her tapes from the California based importer, Regal Inc., which furnishes the newest Tagalog hits in Manila.

Her journey to her own place in the sun in the US started when she met the handsome 21-year-old GI Ron Armstrong from Montana. She was a 17-year-old Ilocana impressed by this US Navy Officer introduced by her uncle from America. "My uncle, who was also in the military, said that he is a reliable guy. Ron courted me through letters and we met on September 1979 for one day only. When he came back on December 1979, he proposed to me and in eleven days, we got married. I was not only smitten; I had the female instinct *na siya na nga* (he is the one). Our marriage has been going strong for 24 years," she muses.

Being a wife of an electronics technician in the US Navy enabled Maggie to satisfy her penchant for travel. After staying for three years in the Philippines, she and her two children, a boy and a girl, hopped around America and other parts of the world. "Ron was stationed in California, Florida, Japan, Okinawa, Oregon, Hawaii, Virginia, to name a few of the places we lived."

Early ventures

Maggie narrated that when she first arrived in the US, she first worked in a little hotel in Orange, California in the housekeeping department. But she left the job because "Ron told me it is better to stay home and take care of them (the children) than get a nanny for them. So I stayed home and indulged in setting up a tailoring shop inside the house."

While she says that she found sewing fun, it did not bring her the fulfillment she craved for. "I knew I had to move on to bigger things. So I set up a computer store since everybody is hooked on the Internet and everybody likes to be techno-literate," she admits. "I set up a computer retail store in Honolulu in 1990 and named my first venture, 'Computers and More.'" She sold all kinds of computers-desktops, laptops, accessories and other gadgets. She was able to keep the store afloat for almost four and a half years before Ron decided to move back to Oregon.

Home at last

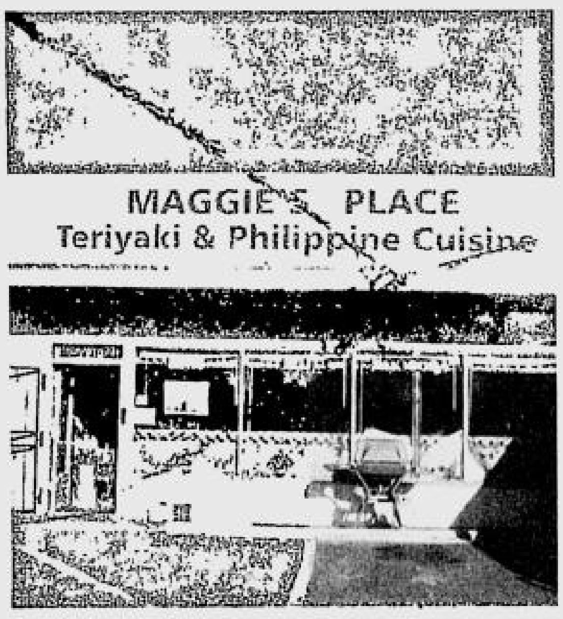
"Ron loved the landscape, the people and the lifestyle in the Northwest since it is not too hurried. It is just right for people who wanted to stop and smell the roses once in awhile," Maggie relates. "We knew all along when he got stationed in Oregon that it will be our home since we bought a home here in Aloha, Oregon in 1988."

She immediately reopened her store, "Computers and More," after they moved to Aloha, Oregon in 1994 but the market did not click. After eight months, she ventured into selling Philippine products and putting up her "Philippine Market" in Aloha in the same year. She also sold food-to-go like *pork adobo, lumpia, pancit, lechon* and others. She opened a "Philippine Oriental Market" in NE Portland called "Philippine Oriental Food and Gifts" in late September of 1994.

The fruits of her entrepreneurial dream are seen in the good future awaiting her children. Maggie says that her 24-year-old son, who is taking up Business Law at Portland State University (PSU), will be graduating next year. Her daughter, who is now 22, is pursuing her degree in Computer Science also in PSU.

She has also shared these fruits with her parents and siblings. She was able to petition her two younger siblings and her parents who are all now in Oregon. "We are all here in America but I will always be proud that I am a Filipino."

MAGGIE Mora-Armstrong in her kitchen



Maggie's place in the sun

INSIDE Maggie's Restaurant

Blacksmith with golden work values keeps furnace burning

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

ALL ABOUT WORK

FRESH from high school, Marlon Perez chose to hang around the sweltering blacksmith shop in the neighborhood. His peers in the Balagasan District in Lucena City during the late seventies killed time with wild and carefree activities.

He simply could not recall back then why he was so eager to stay inside the shop and run errand for the workers, with all the noise of steel banging on burning iron. "Maybe, I was fascinated with the way the blacksmith carved something out of hot steel like bolo and others," Perez, now 42, said.

The Buzar family owns the old shop, which was only one of several blacksmith shops in the city during the period. But after almost 25 years, Perez is the only original worker left in the trade that keeps the furnace burning.

The Buzars are still the ones running the business, even after the transfer of the shop to its present location in a corner of the Pantok district.

Care

The job leaves no room for carelessness, according to Perez. "One false handling of the steel could result in fatal accident. Eye injury is one," he said, as he stressed that every worker must wear eye protection and always bear in mind the safety not only of himself but also of his coworkers. He showed several wound marks from injuries he had in the past. "Sometimes, we are three workers here and I'm the 'maestro.' My two assistants must be smaller than I, or else our hammers would end up hitting each other," he said, as he explained their formation around the steel anvil while they alternately strike the burning iron.

A rusty sign *"Pandayan ni Samang"* (*samang* is shortened version of *"kasama"* and was the common address for a "dear friend" during the seventies), written in paint on a now-sooty iron sheet, is pasted in front of the work area.

"But now, we're not into mass production of common steel products. What we've been doing are made-to-order industrial and farm implements, just anything that can be created from steel-like bolo, crowbar, sickle for coconut gathering, cobbler's and butcher's knives, and the like," Perez said.

When asked about their business condition, he shrugged his shoulders as he explained that it now depends on the total work order. "If there is none, I'm the only one running the shop," he said. "But if there's really no work to do, I sideline as a waiter for different caterers," Perez added. He said he earns P300 a day from turning hot steels into useful tools plus commissions.

Competition

Unlike the glowing furnace in the past where the air was pumped manually, now an electric wind blower has been converted to pump a gush of air straight into the burning coal to maintain the preferred heat. The air tube has an improvised device to control the right amount of wind needed by the furnace.

"If we will not control the flow of air, you'll soon find out that the burning piece of steel in the furnace has been liquefied," the blacksmith explained.

The smoldering bits of charcoal fuel transform the steel into a soft piece of iron ready to receive the hammering rhythm of successive solid blows from the set-hammers of the three blacksmiths standing around the anvil.

Perez reveals that the flood of Taiwan-made steel blade items and other industrial tools has affected their trade. "But we have to move on and continue the trade or else, where will our town mates go if they want to order for a particular steel product?" he said with a sense of pride.

But Perez boasted that the imported tools in the market are not match to the fine quality of their products. "Sad to say, most of the buyers are lured to buy because of the outside beauty of the foreign items," lamented the father of five children. He said their butcher's knife only costs P200 to P350 and regular knife, P150.

During busy days, he said, they could manufacture a total of 20 bolos of different types: sharp, shining sharp and with special handles.

In one point of the interview, an ambulant shoe-repairman dropped by to get a pair of made-to-order skiving knife. Perez charged the customer only P60 for the two sharp knives. "What I used for those knives were just pieces of scrap steel just lying in the corner. Usually, our customer just walks in here and provides us the details of their job orders," he said.

No waste

Different figures of assorted steel were scattered around the shop, mostly various sizes of vehicle's spring-leafs, industrial bearings of different diameters and junk from the country's dilapidated railway system. Some of them look rusty and have seen better usage but for Perez, "they still possess the qualities of the best steel, hard but bendable."

"I regularly scour my favorite junkyard in search for this kind of steel," he said while holding a twisted iron in one hand that looks like a railway bolt. "Any piece of old steel like a railway bolt is guaranteed good quality," he assured. "The best steel is the leaf-spring of the old horse-drawn cart (*calesa*). But its now getting rare," he added.

In less than 20 minutes, he fashioned a construction chisel made from the railway bolt. As soon as he was finished, he pointed the newly made chisel in the face of the anvil and hammered it with a solid blow. The furious meeting of steel elicited a spark but the sharpness of the chisel remained. "Taiwan-made chisel in the hardware costs around P200 but we're selling this kind of item for only P50," Perez said as he shows the newly-crafted chisel that only needs a little time in the electric sander for the final touch.

PHOTO BY DELFIN MALLARI

MARLON Perez , the blacksmith at work

Office grapevine blooms through Instant Messenger

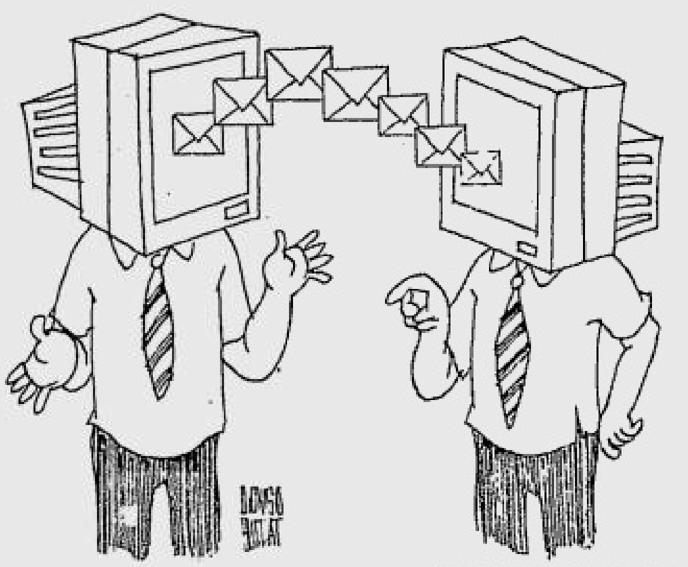


ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

LONDON—Flirting with colleagues, scheming against the boss and gossiping about coworkers are among the most common Instant Messenger, or IM, missives circulating around the office, according to a new survey.

So-called "IMing"-the act of sending quick message exchanges to other Internet users- has become a popular workplace pastime.

Just as they did with email a few years ago, corporations have now embraced IM technology as it enables co-workers in large organizations to converse quickly and cheaply. But IM's popularity has its drawbacks, experts say.

Because many users believe it cannot be monitored by the boss, many freely fire off messages ranging from cruel cracks about a colleague's hair to sensitive information about major corporate projects.

"Businesses don't really monitor IMing," said Nigel Hawthorn, European marketing director for Blue Coat Systems, a Web security firm that conducted the survey of over 300 firms in the US and Britain, the world's two largest IM markets.

"If you're leaning forward and typing away at your machine, who's to know what you're typing about," he added.

The preponderance of personal chatter leaves companies open to sensitive corporate leaks and even lawsuits, Hawthorn said.

In the UK, 65 percent of the 204 respondents said they use IM for personal purposes during work hours, the survey said.

Half the UK respondents admitted to peppering their IMs with abusive language; 40 percent used IM to conspire on colleagues during conference calls and nearly one-third confessed to "making sexual advances" in the easily disguised dialogue box.

US respondents, meanwhile, gave more tame accounts of thei IM usage. For example, less than one in five American survey par ticipants said they used IM to comment on senior management o to flirt.

One explanation for the disparity is the Big Brother notion Nearly 60 percent of British respondents did not believe or wen unsure whether their IM conversations could be monitored by their employer while 71 percent of US respondents believed-correctly-that IM messages could be traced.

Reuters

PEOPLE at WORK

E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo**
Subsection Editor **Regina Galang Reyes**

Catching a dream needs practice

CEO mentor Abrera PDI FILE

By Emily Abrera
Chair, McCann-Erikson Phils.

DEAR Ma'am Emily,

First of all, I'd like to thank you for inspiring me not to lose hope on one's dream. I have a dream... a dream of becoming a copywriter. Two years ago, while I was smoking outside our house, a car passed by and that idea just struck me. Within three hours, I was able to come up with nine ideas for a commercial for a certain product. In two weeks time, I had my scripts.

Then, I looked for the advertising agency handling the product's account. Eventually, I was able to locate them after numerous phone calls to different offices. I tried to get an appointment but could not. Months passed and I started to lose hope.

Then, I read the article about you in the Philippine Daily Inquirer. Your story inspired me tremendously. And on May 5, 2003, I went to the ad agency's office with my brother who helped me find the place.

The associate creative director interviewed me. He seemed so nice and trustworthy. So when he asked me if I was willing to leave my script with him, I did not hesitate. He asked me to write more scripts on anything I could think of and said he would call me within a week. It's almost a month now but still he has not called.

ASK YOUR CEO

How long should I wait for his call? Should I call them now? What should I do, now that they have my scripts? I hope you can help me because right now, I'm trying to contemplate whether I should go abroad to work in a factory in Taiwan since my girlfriend and I have a three-month-old boy.

Dream Catcher

So you want to be a copywriter! Since that's how I started out in advertising, let me share some of my experiences in that field, and then, you can decide if that's really the kind of career you want to embrace.

Although we still distinguish copywriters from art directors in terms of their basic skill orientation, today they are all seen more as "conceptualizers" or "ideators," people in the creative department whose job is to come up with advertising ideas or concepts. In most agencies today, copywriters are paired with art directors into "concept teams."

Because it has increasingly become a visually oriented field, some of today's most powerful advertising messages are carried more by powerful visuals than by text or words. Hence, there is less dependence today on actual copy to explain the merits or benefits offered by certain brands, but rather, we look for the impact of a simple, single BIG IDEA that can capture the consumer's attention and imagination.

More sophisticated consumers

If you compare ads today with those of say, 20 years ago, you will notice that the old ads had a lot of copy, whether in the form of dialogue or sheer product information. Many of the old ads were logical and rational, whereas many of the current ads you see are less sequential, more subtle, and more engaging than before. That's because consumers today are also more visually literate, having grown up on a steady diet of television and movies. Today's consumers are very exacting, much more so than the audiences of the previous generation. And given the incredible clutter (sheer number of different messages that we get exposed to) that characterizes the media scene today, the conceptualizer's job is not an easy one.

Advertising is an exciting field because it straddles art and commerce. However, unlike art that is purely aesthetic expression, advertising has a commercial intent. There are communication goals it must achieve and business results that it must accrue. As such, its cornerstone is discipline.

A lot of work

Before we get to the fun part (coming up with the ideas), there's a lot of work that goes into formulating the marketing and communication strategy for a brand. There's heaps of information that we must distill, about the brand's history, the attitude and behavior of its target markets, the competition. There are fresh insights that must be unearthed, and decisions that must be made about a brand's direction before we settle on the single idea we wish to get across in the brand communication. Once the client and the agency have agreed on that, then we start conceptualizing.

In the first couple of years on the job, aspiring copywriters are bound to experience major frustration, and you have to be prepared for it. Even after you've had some training, it doesn't mean that your ideas, no matter how wonderful they seem to you or your teammates, will be approved by your supervisor or by the client. Sometimes the idea is great, but it's not "ownable" by the brand. Sometimes, it's a moving script, but it's off-tangent. Not all great ideas sell, you see.

Selling ideas

You won't always fully understand why certain concepts get junked, because there are many variables. In truth, a lot also ride on how well you are able to present these ideas and "sell" them to client. This, of course, is a special skill that creative people learn over time. Ideally, it is the combined effort of all the different members of the agency team that persuades a client to appreciate and approve a proposed campaign.

You feel you are cut out to be a copywriter, which is fine, Dream Catcher. But don't think that submitting a few scripts will land you a job in an agency. You must do the rounds. Send out a well-written letter of application to different shops or go personally and apply. Ask to be given a copy test. (Good agencies will give you something specific to work on so they can gauge whether you have the potential to be an advertising copywriter or not.)

So far, you've approached one agency. If the person you spoke to didn't get back to you, then you should follow up. Write, call or visit. Maybe, there was no opening to begin with; maybe they were looking for someone with agency experience; maybe your submitted scripts have gotten lost in some paper file somewhere. For all you know, the person you talked to may no longer be there! But don't let that get in the way of your pursuing this career, if you are convinced that you have the talent to write. (If I had given up when I was starting out because no one would hire me, then I wouldn't be writing this column today.)

Don't get hung up on the first set of scripts you wrote. Consider it practice. Copywriters have to do dozens before they get one approved; we have endless capacity to produce fresh ideas. The secret is in not giving up.

If copywriting is your dream, then keep chasing it. It's the only way to catch it.

(Our CEO columnists can answer requests for career advice through this column. Send your request by postal mail to the People at Work Editor, PDI Bldg., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City 1200 or by email to peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph)

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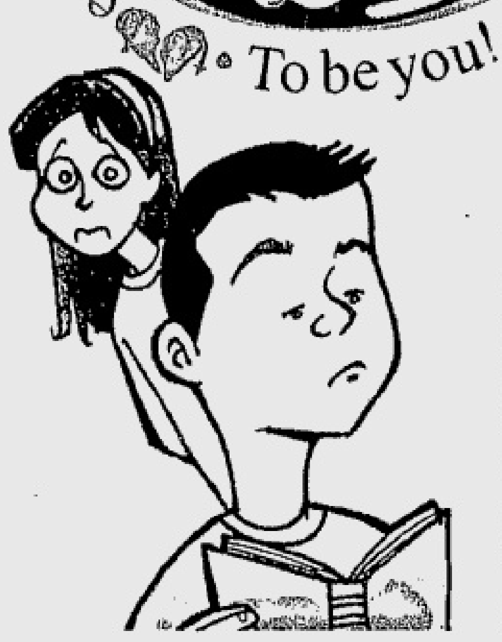
Merienda muna...

The virgin notes



THIS week, we allow you to live vicariously through the experiences of others. We've got stories of "first times"—exploring a foreign country alone, getting drunk, falling in love with someone of the same sex, losing a loved one to death, facing brats on the mat and conquering great heights.

We also have confessions from a proud virgin, a funny look at bold stars who capitalize on their supposed intact hymens, lessons from one famous movie and reviews galore.

Enjoy! Because just like this issue, first times are supposed to be relished.

What kind of a 'virgin' are you?

Text and photos by Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

I've never tried smoking... 100-percent virgin.—**Nicolas Reyes, 18**

I've never cried over a guy and never had chickenpox.—**Inca, 18** (at left). I've never had my hair dyed. —**Marthe, 18** (right)

I've never bought original CDs!—**JP, 18**

I am a Harry Potter and LOTR ("Lord of the Rings") virgin. I never liked reading fiction. I also never smoked weed but, strangely, I have a collection of weed accessories. —**Mars Opulencia, 18**

I've never cheated during tests, not even attempted to because I easily chicken out. Teachers scare me! And I have never watched a movie on DVD. —**Andrea de Guzman, 19**

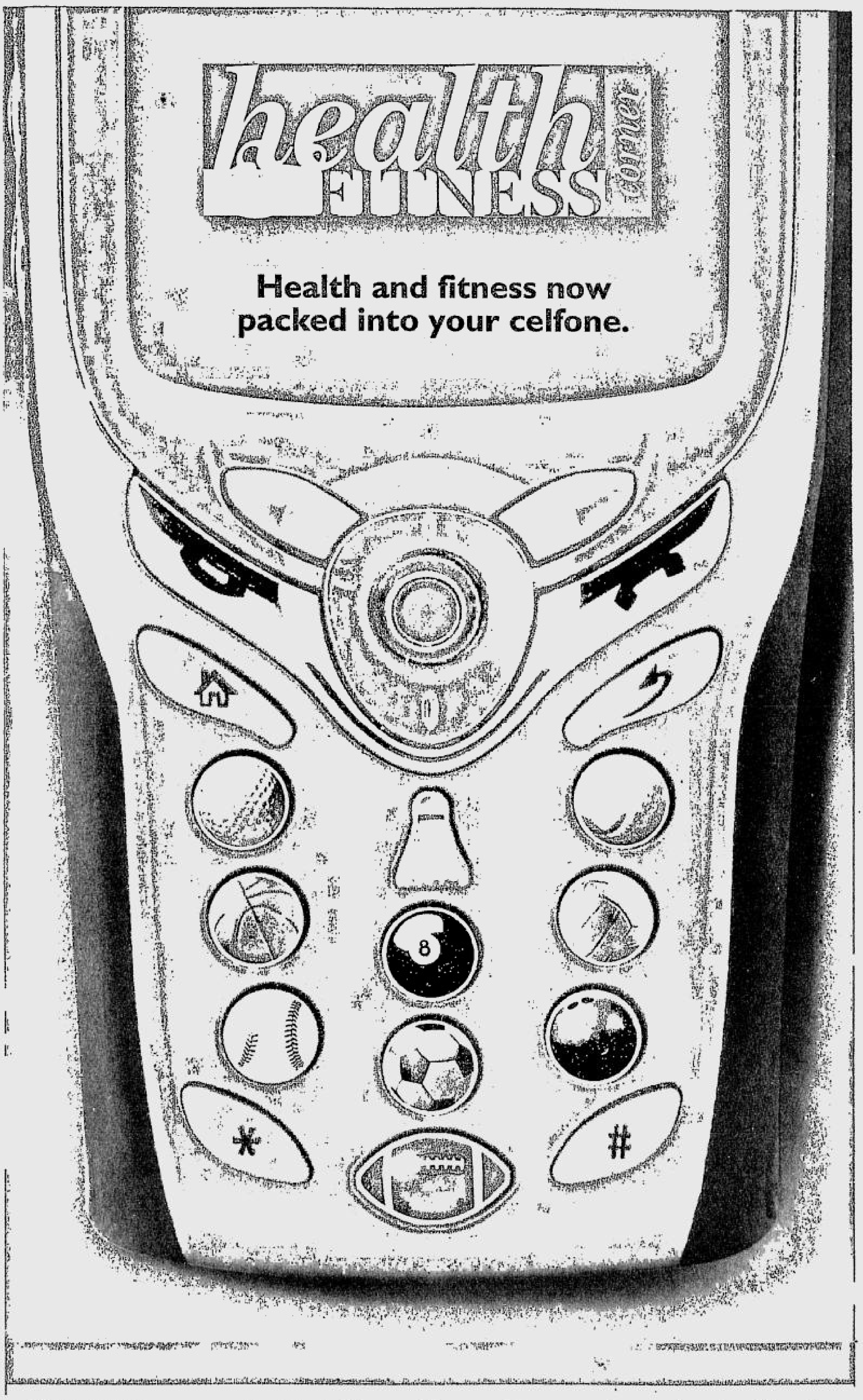
I'm a relationships virgin because I have my priorities straight! —**Nina Marcelo, 18**

I've never been drunk. —**Merck del Fiero, 18**

I've never been caught or flagged down by a traffic enforcer. —**Ryan, 17**

I'm a "Meteor Garden" virgin. I've never watched the show or heard the music. —**Karen Pamintuan, 17**

I'm a basketball virgin. I don't know much about rules and can't play to save my life. I'm also a virgin in terms of the music of the pop group Busted, and I plan to stay that way!—**Conrad Javier, 20, vocalist, Boy Elroy**



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Boldly virginal

By Armin P. Adina

To go by all their protestations of sexual innocence, virgin bold stars do exist, and they've all come to roost in Philippine show biz!

AUBREY Miles confessed during the press conference of her launching movie "Prosti" that she was no longer a virgin. Well, she may have lost her virginity, but admitting it has apparently given her a high-speed ticket to stardom.

Director Erik Matti had wanted to hire someone who already had sex in real life to portray the role of a hard-core prostitute in the movie. Matti averred that for someone to realistically perform simulated sexual acts in front of the camera, the actress should have gone through the real thing.

Needless to say, the movie was a certified box-office hit, and it made Aubrey a household name.

If you think that virginity is a non-issue among the local film industry's sex nymphets, think again. There are still quite a handful of boldies who insist that they remain virgins despite the salacious roles they play onscreen. Yes, such a thing as a virgin bold star exists in this country!

A couple of years ago, for instance, one-time boldie Piel Morena insisted she was still a virgin. Well, was she in for a surprise when the press made such a big thing about her revelation. She did insist that it was the truth, but while the confession may have sounded like a mere media ploy to drum up interest in her, it didn't take her anywhere. Now she's no longer active in show biz.

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Like Piel, starlet Monina Perez also professed her virginity and said she would remain so until she got married. And like Piel, the star of Leo Films' "Hinog sa Pilit, Sobra sa Tamis" was soon after consigned to obscurity.

Successful

With these examples, simple logic may lead to the conclusion that non-virgins become immensely successful while "virgins" are forgotten. However, this is not always the case. A number of current sex sirens insist on their virginity, yet retain a big following among Pinoy moviegoers.

Maui Taylor, for one. The original "hot babe *ng bayan*" declares her virginity with conviction every time she is asked about it. Maui says she holds dear her mother's reminder that her virginity is the most important thing she can offer her husband.

Of course, if this is indeed true, she should be applauded and awarded for convincingly playing every imaginable sexy move in all her blockbuster movies.

Then there's "flyover beauty" Diana Zubiri. The young starlet can propel male audiences' testosterone levels to the rafters, but yes, she's pure as morning milk.

Unlike Maui, Diana has said she need not tie the knot first before giving up her V, (that's for virginity, okay?) she only needs to find the right man who deserves it.

You can also count Fil-German Jen Rosendahl and fellow Viva Hot Babe Katya Santos among the virgin boldies.

It was Katya who went for the most brazen gimmick of all. She underwent a medical examination to prove her virginity. Her obstetrician duly came back to say that, thank heavens, her hymen was still intact.

Yup, the signs are loud and clear: Virginity is still a major issue in our society. Sexually active men still frown at the thought of marrying a non-virgin bride, and chastity is a sacred virtue that increases a woman's marketability.

This should explain why our screen bombshells have been trying to outdo each other in proclaiming their virginity. Does it work? Well, just check out the queues to their latest movies to find out.

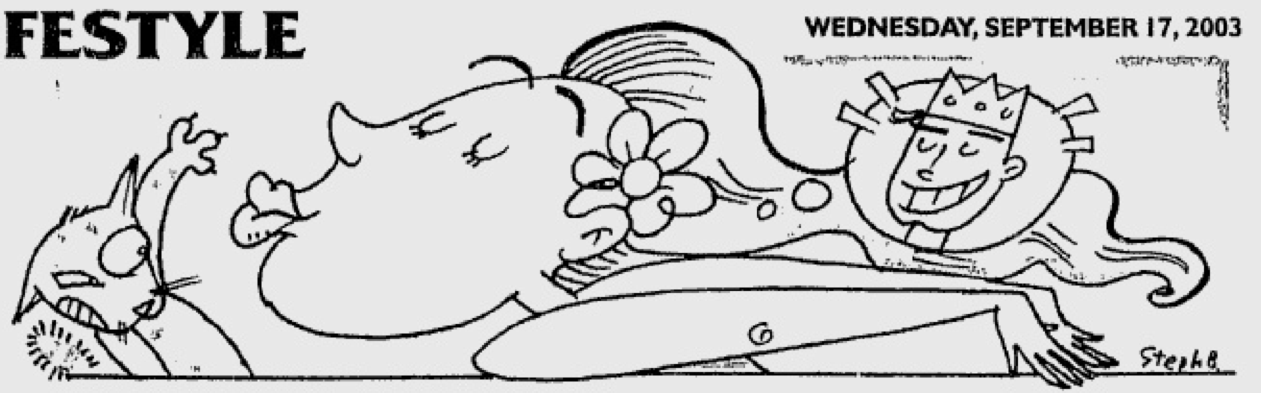

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Confessions of a closet virgin

By Daphne Anteros
2bU! Correspondent

I may be stuck warming the benches, but I'd rather sit this ballgame out until someone for real comes along

"HELLO! I'm twentysomething and I've never been kissed."

Normally that statement would have been met with encouraging applause, but in my case, it was met with loud boos and wads of used tissue paper.

Welcome to Closet Virgins Anonymous, the sanctuary for individuals who are virgins not by choice but by the utter lack of it.

Oh, we have plenty of members; they just aren't aware of it yet.

So I am a virgin. Why hide it, you ask? That's because it's not just about the hymenal aspect.

I've never exchanged saliva with anyone. I've never tried to pull an "American Pie" stunt or similar acts of sexual experimentation. I've never even had intimate contact with the opposite sex, save for Truth or Dare "accidents," familial showcases of affection and *manyak* moments from your everyday perverts.

The reason? I am simply waiting for the right time and right person.

Yeah, right. What that really means is, "I am simply waiting for a miracle in the form of Paul Walker to come up to me with a sexy grin and ask me if I wanted to check out his pad." At least, that's how it goes for me.

No, I am not itching to get laid, lest my statement would attract the wrong kind of attention. It's just that I don't have many options nor instances that would put me in a decent position for intimacy.

Blind dates? Call boys? One-night stands? Come on. While I respect individuals who engage in these sorts of things, I'd rather take the more conventional route. Which is probably why I'm getting to be so good at knitting.

Pathetically inexperienced

I'm not saying that I don't fantasize about PG-13 or R-18 stuff. Yes, I'm still very much the little Catholic-bred schoolgirl I was brought up to be. But as far as my raging young adult hormones are concerned, there's a humongous difference between being virginal and being pathetically inexperienced.

Fine, I'm still young. But in an era wherein getting your first kiss at the age of 20 is considered ridiculously unheard of, one can never be too young.

In my case, I'm ridiculously stuck in the Dark Ages. Heck, I didn't even know what a blow job was until a guy friend back in high school kindly explained it to me while our other friends snickered away. Then again, ignorance is bliss.

Looks deceive

For some inane reason, some people equate looks with experience. The better-looking you are, the more you attract experience.

I, for one, do not agree. It's still a mystery to me why people act so shocked when they find out I've been boy-less since birth.

So what if I'm pretty, smart and talented? So what if I'm a great catch? Does that mean I can't be a virgin? Obviously, my ego is healthy enough to put up with awkward questions about my status.

But nowadays, no twentysomething with great assets can proudly proclaim her virginity without eliciting raised eyebrows or contemptuous remarks from people.

The solution? Let them think what they want to think. If they don't believe me, so be it.

Warming the benches

Why am I exposing myself to ridicule, contempt and possibly more *pambabastos* from perverts and hypocrites alike? It's because I believe that there are many like me out there who are stuck in this predicament, whether they are aware of it or not.

Yes, people like me still do exist. While other people my age are happily rounding bases, I'm stuck warming the benches.

But I don't really mind much. At the risk of coming off like a Filipino chapter of America's "True. Love Waits" Foundation, I'd rather sit this ballgame out for the time being until someone for real comes along.

In the meantime, I'll be drooling over my pretty-boy posters and mentally perfecting the art of locking lips with that hunk from the second "Charlie's Angels" movie.

I am a virgin. And a damn proud one at that.

E-mail the author at earthbound_goddess@hotmail.com.

Adventures in alcohol

By Paolo R. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

While my first brush with drunkenness turned out to be a rotten experience, it did teach me some sacred truths to live (and drink) by

CALL it my baptism in booze. Or more likely my initiation into the ills of severe intoxication.

Growing up in a family compound filled with many budding young adults, alcohol has always held a strange but intriguing appeal to me. As a clueless kid, I had the extreme pleasure every New Year's eve of witnessing, without fail, the bizarre transformation of my older relatives from reserved and responsible adults to aunts and uncles gone nuts shortly after the clock struck 12.

In spite of the lavish programs they put up to entertain us—the *watusi*-engrossed kids, their amused parents and our 80-plus-year-old matriarch (who, more often than not, had no clue as to her progeny's sloshed state)—the best show that night would always be watching my kin lose all sense of sanity on the dance floor.

What weird effects those bubbly liquids had, I thought. One day, I told myself, when I "grow up," I'd like to see what all the fuss was about.

And I did, many New Year's eve later, when the same clueless kid—now near legal and in high school—found himself being offered by the same relatives his first legitimate bottle of beer, among many other curious, multicolored liquors made available at the Big House bar.

While I may have had the occasional flute of champagne for mandatory Christmas dinner toasts (my parents' way of breaking me in so that "I'd know how to do it right"), this was the first time I was to be allowed to drink in a social setting.

Wow, it felt awfully cool to finally be able to do what the grownups did, even if I had no idea what kind of "hit" to expect.

Halfway through the bottle, the lack of any immediate, obvious effect left me a little confused and disappointed. Perhaps a tad too impatient, I did what any audacious, overeager teenager does: I downed all the booze and gladly consumed all others being freely offered.

Four Pale Pilsens, two glasses of red wine, a swig of scotch and a couple of tequila Jell-O shots later, I had it all figured out.

For the first time in my life, I was plastered. Still, seeing how messed up I already was, I intended to get hammered even more. I was unstoppable.

But just as I was about to sample some of the Absolut Citron being waved in front of my face, my stomach signaled it had enough.

First came the unsteady steps, then the warped sense of vision, followed by the unexpected surge of nausea, culminating in my fateful date with the toilet. The rest, well, was a blur, and I conked out soon after that.

While my inaugural adventure with alcohol turned out to be a rotten experience (and most uncouth at that), my first night of drunken debauchery did have its merits.

It taught me some sacred truths to live (and drink) by—that a mixture of malts, wines and distilled spirits always makes for a messy conclusion; that too much, too soon is always a recipe for disaster; and that sometimes, sobriety, as opposed to the nasty, post-party hangover, is a far, far better thing.

Truths I learned from 'American Pie'

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

NEVER take drinks from strangers, unless they're actual Hollywood stars.

Although conservatives frown at the idea behind the hit movie, it is actually reflective of real life

"AMERICAN Pie" is all about a group of testosterone-charged guys who simply had enough of their virginal status. They make a pact to get laid before high school graduation, targeting prom night as The Night.

Jim (Jason Biggs) likes foreign student Nadia (Shannon Elizabeth) who incidentally makes him lose his balls. One memorable day, Nadia approaches Jim and asks him for a private tutorial. It was a disastrous encounter so he ends up with Michelle (Alyson Hannigan), an annoying bore who can't stop babbling about her fab time in camp.

Kevin (Thomas Ian Nicholas) is the boyfriend of Vicky (Tara Reid). He has trouble saying the three magic words and seems bent only on having sex with her. Vicky finally agrees to have sex with him on prom night.

Oz (Chris Klein), the lacrosse player, isn't afraid of his gentler side and falls in love with his fellow choir member, Heather (Mena Suvari). They get especially close on prom night but don't get to sleep together.

Finch (Eddie Kaye Thomas) tries to get the girls by paying experienced Jessica (Natasha Lyonne) to spread the word that he is well endowed. But after downing his *mochaccino*, which Stifler (Sean W. Scott) laced with a laxative, Finch ends up nowhere near a bed come prom night.

The teen flick may have raised many a conservative's unplucked eyebrow with its uninhibited views on sex and virginity, but the movie's sincerity and realism made it a hit with the young crowd.

In fact, many accurate reflections of what is happening in real life can be derived from "American Pie."

1. "Nothing is perfect and you can't plan everything," says Vicky. Sometimes, no matter how well you plan, no matter how long you wait or how many expensive candles you prepare, the first time can still turn out to be blah, traumatic or far from the perfect scene you imagined it would be.

2. What you see or hear isn't always the real or complete thing. With her boring camp tales, it's hard to imagine Michelle as highly sexual, but she turns out to be exactly that at the end of the movie. Geeky Sherman (Chris Owen) convinces almost everybody he is no longer a virgin, but is found out later on.

3. The first time can happen when you least expect it—and how. Flinch is resigned to not getting any action on prom night, only to have Stifler's mom becoming a little too friendly.

4. You don't have to give in to peer pressure. Come prom night, it looks like Kevin is the only one who will be able to say goodbye to his virginity. He gives his friends a pep talk and is interrupted by Jim who says, "You don't need us to get laid."

I have always believed that the first time should be with someone you love or, at least, someone very special. You can call me Niña for feeling this way, I don't mind.

Unfortunately in the movie, it isn't exactly like that. Jim loses it to someone he never sexually fancied and Finch to a person he has just met. Kevin is jilted immediately afterwards.

Oz might have hit the jackpot by discovering he and Heather are falling in love but, amazingly, they don't make love even if they are the most qualified, so to speak.

That's what makes "American Pie" quite realistic. Still, there are many truths out there and everybody has the freedom to choose which ones to claim for his or her own to help in deciding who to give one's heart or body to.

LEARN from Jim: Always lock your door.

E-mail the pie-loving author at katotino@yahoo.com

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Lessons learned the hard way

Climbing a mountain is as tough as making your dreams come true

By Arlene M. Paredes
2bU! Correspondent

FINALLY, I know how it feels to climb a mountain. Although Pico de Loro is a small peak, I'm certain that my first attempt is not going to be the last.

I joined the climb mainly because I wanted to flex some muscles and hopefully lose weight or at least feel lighter after the two-day adventure. I didn't realize there was so much more to learn and appreciate up there on Pico de Loro, 664 meters above sea level.

Things I learned from the climb

1. You don't climb a mountain for fun. It isn't fun to walk for three to four hours, wondering if you could continue for another minute. Several times during the climb, I blamed myself for joining when I could have just stayed at home and watched television all day.

It's certainly not fun carrying a heavy bag when your legs are shaking in exhaustion and you feel the need to pee. It's not fun to be the last in a line of climbers under a scorching sun in a seemingly endless path.

Going down, I practically had to crawl and stretch my arms to find vines to hang on to, unmindful of the dirt and all. It's not fun but it's challenging and totally rewarding in the end.

If you believe that challenges can make you a better person and you're ready for them, then go ahead and climb.

Yes, I was able to flex my muscles and I did feel lighter after the climb but I also gained a lot more than I expected.

2. When the journey is long, minimize the complaints and just keep going. How many times did I stop during the climb and whine about practically everything—unbearable heat, tired legs, heavy bag, chapped lips, etc.? But whining didn't help me at all.

I could just have kept going, pausing only when really necessary and sparing the time to enjoy the sunset at the peak. Complaining merely wasted a lot of my energy.

3. Drink water moderately. I thought drinking every now and then would ease my exhaustion and lessen the difficulty of climbing.

I drank water every time I felt my mouth and throat were parched. I failed to notice (and only realized after the climb) that I was feeling heavy during the climb because of too much water intake, which slowed me down a lot.

What I thought would help me only slowed me down.

4. Eat even if condiments are missing during a meal, and the soda or juice is no longer cold. It is berter to eat something even if it doesn't appeal to your taste buds than continue the journey on an aching, empty stomach.

So I ate our chicken *tinola* with soy sauce instead of salt. Fortunately, it didn't taste as bad as I thought.

5. Don't think of quitting, especially when you're only an inch away from making it to the top. Letting yourself toy with the idea of quitting even for a second will ruin the last few minutes before you reach the peak.

I actually thought it would be okay to stop and accept that God didn't create me to climb mountains, only to stay home and smell the roses in the garden.

But I realized there's no point in inventing excuses when the glaring reality was I could make it to the top if I wanted it badly enough. And boy, I did!

6. Victory is sweeter when the obstacles are greater, when the suffering is long and hardships are almost unbearable. Success is more meaningful and fulfilling when the task practically crushes your body and tears it apart.

At the peak of Pico de Loro, after gazing at the spectacular sunset with shades of indigo and orange dancing in the sky, it suddenly became clear to me why mountaineers were so passionate about their hobby.

Up there, I understood why they wanted to climb a higher mountain every time despite the arduous trek to the peak. Aside from the astonishing view up there, you get to pat yourself at the back for pursuing your goal no matter the difficulties and the pain.

Climbing a mountain is so much like making your dreams come true. It's not easy.

But if you keep your goal in mind, you will carry on until you make it to the top.

E-mail the author at lhen@postmark.net

ANNA FEGI'S 'STRAIGHT AHEAD'

One classy album

By Jason Doplito
2bU! Correspondent

anna fegi
straight ahead

IT'S hard to be a solo female artist in the country. Many end up resorting to cheap stunts and naughty lyrics in order to get the attention of the average Pinoy music lover.

Perhaps, such humor and mischievousness do gain a following in the music scene, but it is unlikely that artists banking on these tricks can stay strong in the business especially if they have no real talent to back them up.

On the other side of the spectrum, the more "serious" ones would wail and scream their lungs out in order to impress the crowds. They're talented, no question about it, but when everyone else starts to do it, the shrieking becomes irritating.

And so it's a welcome change to hear someone who's serious about her lyrics, while not trying to sound like the "Little Mermaid." Anna Fegi is one classy chick.

The album, whose title subtly refers to her change of hairstyle (from curly to straight), is "soulful and intimate," as Anna writes in the CD jacket herself. "Every song tells a story of my life," she continues. If this is true, then she must have been through a lot in terms of her love life, particularly if one examines the lyrics of her songs.

From being in love (Ikaw Lamang) to being rejected (Ang Puso Ko Ay Dinggin), it's hard not to feel sorry for her because the emotions displayed in Straight Ahead scream "heartbroken!"

One may think that her record is crammed with mush. But take note, they're good mush. Somehow, the maturity of Anna's voice lends a melancholy picture of everyone's darkest relationship history, so only stonehearted folks won't appreciate the pulpy album flavor.

Freshness

But its gloomy vibe could also be its weakest point; the lack of variations in the overarching theme of her album steals the thunder from the better ballads ("Ikaw Ang Kailangan Ko," "Wala Ka Na"). After all, one can only take enough sad songs before dismissing the rest as bland.

Still, it's commendable that Anna does not resort to Mariah Carey tactics in order to spice up the tracks. She breaks away from the pack of growling sirens and attacks her music in a smoother, mellower manner. Although she could do with more ad-libs (to mark her own signature style), her freshness brings out her unadulterated musicality.

And since her 10-track album is generously filled with Filipino songs, you can't accuse Anna of being elitist. In fact, only two English songs made the cut, with one other single, Even If, wavering in a limbo. It starts out with English lyrics (a welcome change in the album) until guest artist Luke Mejares starts crooning in Filipino. It's a fairly decent song, but the English/Tagalog mix-up takes a lot of getting used to.

This is good OPM music, if a bit depressing. "Straight Ahead" makes you wish Anna Fegi would find her one true love, so she'd have happier songs in her next album.

Sweet September

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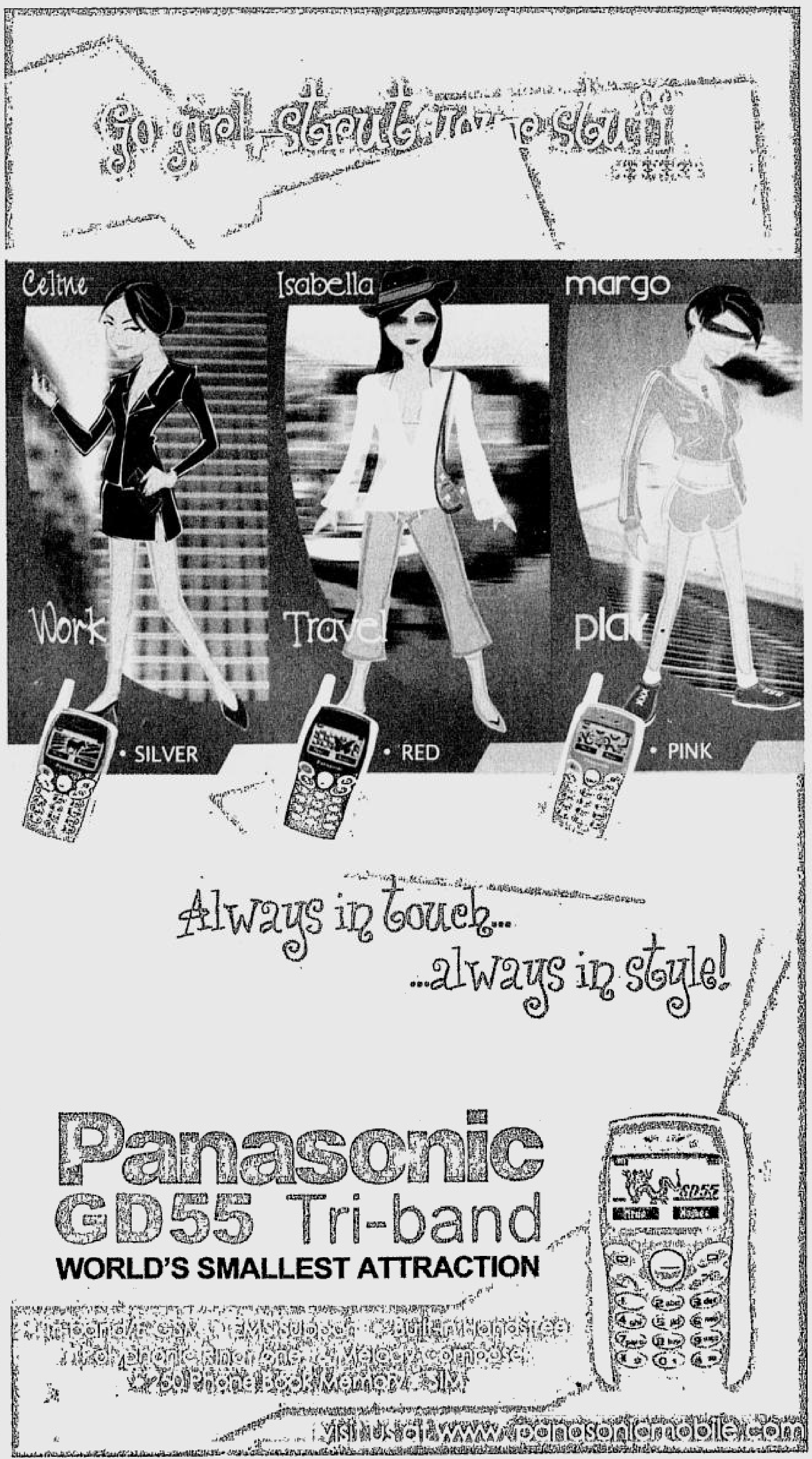

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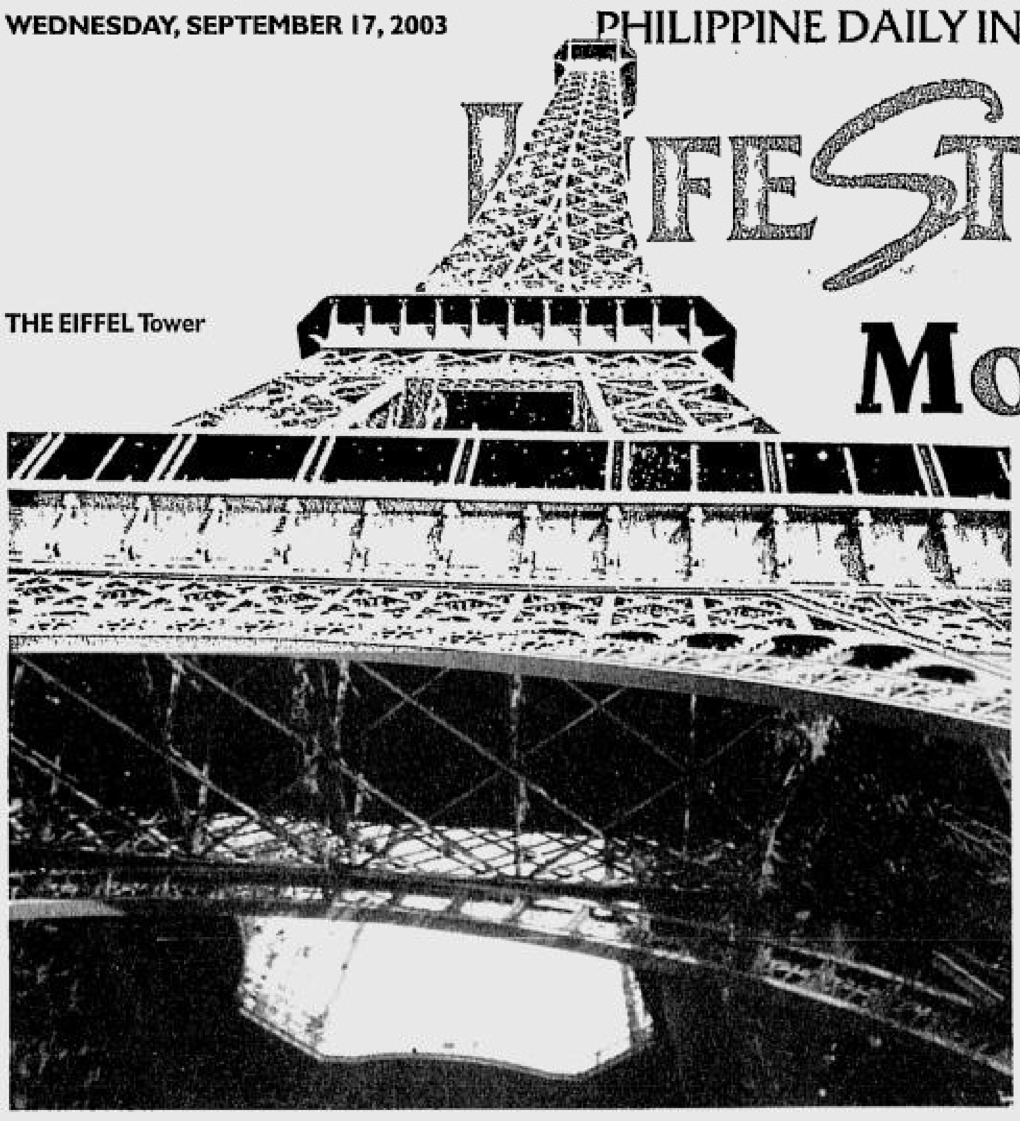


THE EIFFEL Tower

Mon premier voyage à Paris (My first trip to Paris)

Text by Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Miko David

I WAS accepted to go on an exchange student program between the Ateneo de Manila University and ESSCA in Budapest, Hungary. Since our flight had a stopover in Paris, we decided to extend those two hours into three nights. It was my first trip outside of Asia without an adult chaperone.

MON/ D3

I savored the sights of the world's most beautiful city, but was also amazed to see so much graffiti!

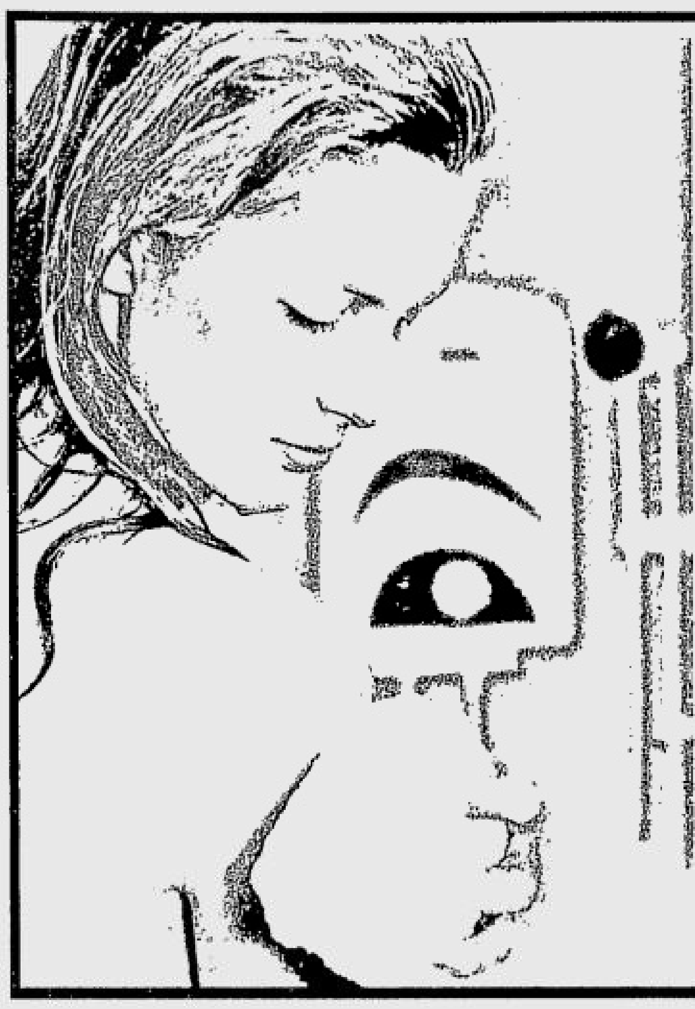
WHAT'S ON at Robinsons

NYOY VOLANTE

Spend an afternoon with strings attached. Catch Nyoy Volante together with Mannos as they promote their latest album from Vicor Music Corporation. It's definitely an afternoon of pure pleasure with these acoustic geniuses.

[illegible]

STARMILLS ROBINSONS PAMPANGA



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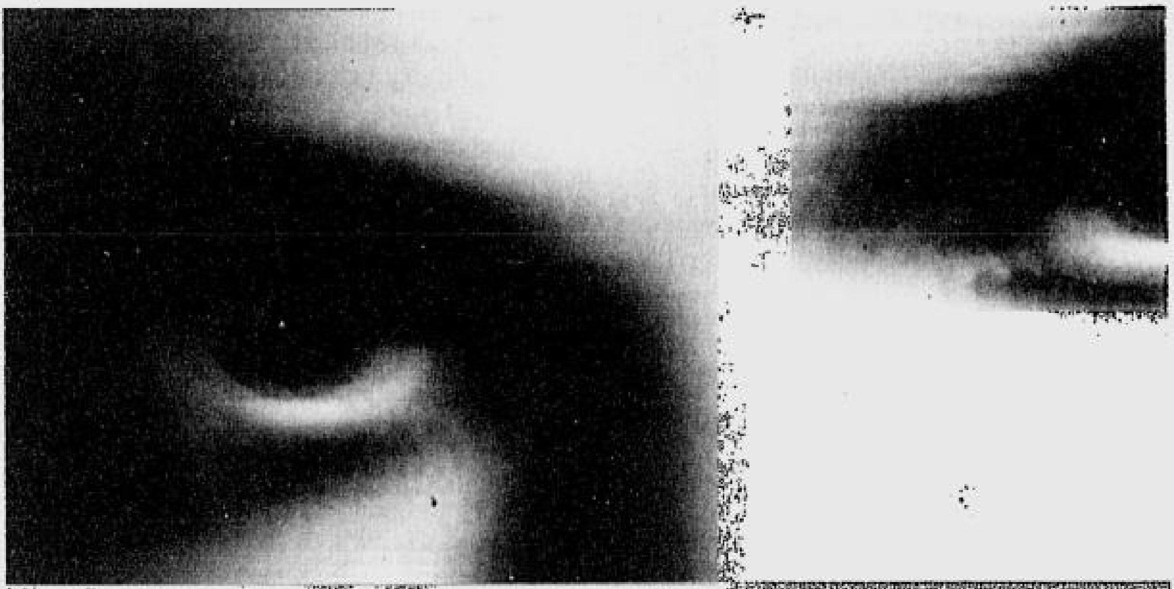

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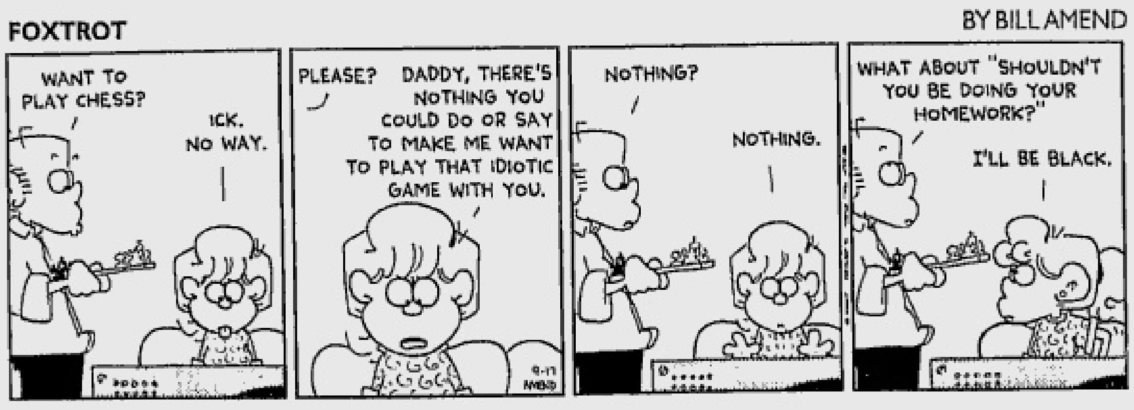
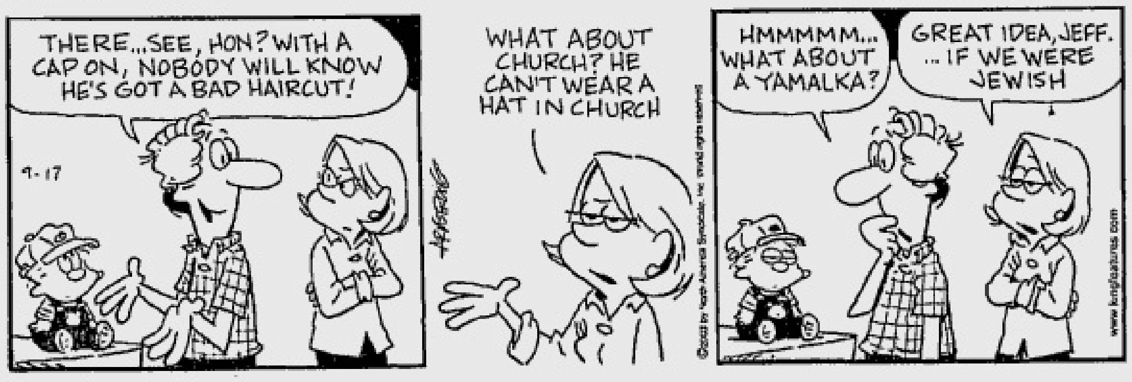
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WANT TO PLAY CHESS?
ICK. NO WAY.
PLEASE?
DADDY, THERE'S NOTHING YOU COULD DO OR SAY TO MAKE ME WANT TO PLAY THAT IDIOTIC GAME WITH YOU.
NOTHING?
NOTHING.
WHAT ABOUT "SHOULDN'T YOU BE DOING YOUR HOMEWORK?"
I'LL BE BLACK.
9-17

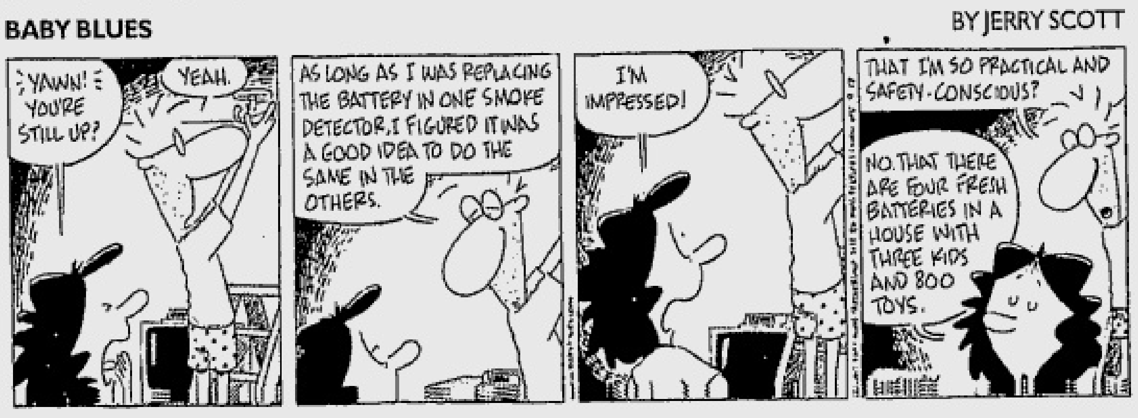
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


THERE...SEE, HON? WITH A CAP ON, NOBODY WILL KNOW HE'S GOT A BAD HAIRCUT!
9-17
WHAT ABOUT CHURCH? HE CAN'T WEAR A HAT IN CHURCH
HMMMMM... WHAT ABOUT A YAMALKA?
GREAT IDEA, JEFF. ... IF WE WERE JEWISH
www.kingfeatures.com

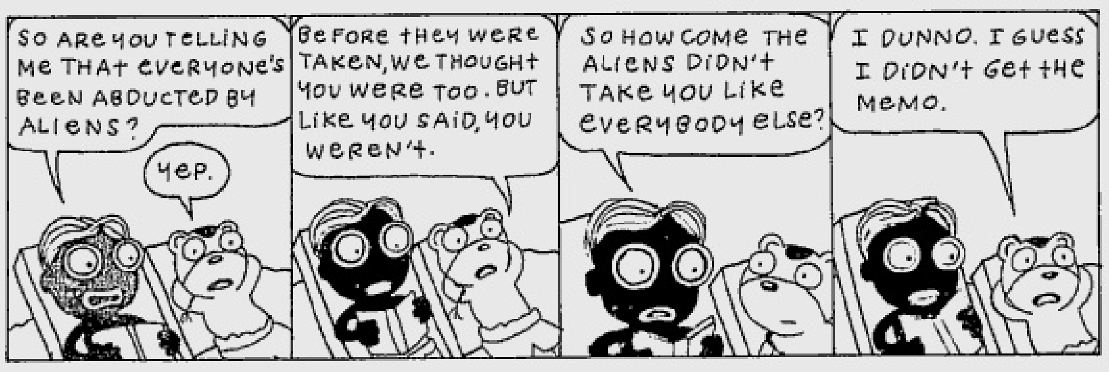
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


YAWN! YOU'RE STILL UP?
YEAH.
AS LONG AS I WAS REPLACING THE BATTERY IN ONE SMOKE DETECTOR, I FIGURED IT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO DO THE SAME IN THE OTHERS.
I'M IMPRESSED!
THAT I'M SO PRACTICAL AND SAFETY-CONSCIOUS?
NO. THAT THERE ARE FOUR FRESH BATTERIES IN A HOUSE WITH THREE KIDS AND 800 TOYS.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SO ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT EVERYONE'S BEEN ABDUCTED BY ALIENS?
YEP.
BEFORE THEY WERE TAKEN, WE THOUGHT YOU WERE TOO. BUT LIKE YOU SAID, YOU WEREN'T.
SO HOW COME THE ALIENS DIDN'T TAKE YOU LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE?
I DUNNO. I GUESS I DIDN'T GET THE MEMO.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are unusually tenacious and persistent. Once you have set your eye on something, you will never let go. Your perseverance and determination to achieve your goals are the keys to your success. You're creative and physically tough. You also have a wry sense of humor. Work hard in the year ahead because your rewards will be immediate.
Birthdate of: John Ritter, actor; Anne Bancroft, actress; Ken Kesey, writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be patient with siblings and daily contacts today. (Patience is not always easy for your sign.) Think of it as being generous to others—because that's what it is.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You love the good life: good food, good wine, good sex and a nice place to live. Resist the temptation to go overboard with your goodies today.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Power struggles with a friend are likely today. Ask yourself if they are worth risking a friendship over. An element of pride and ego could be at stake.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): New regulations at work (especially from the government) might result in attempts to cut costs or introduce reform. Don't waste time complaining.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Romantic relationships could suffer today because one party is trying to "improve" the other. This never works. All it does is destroy trust and create doubt.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Avoid ego conflicts and power struggles with bosses and parents today. They will get you nowhere. If you start something, others will become involved as well.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Political and religious arguments will get you nowhere today. Furthermore, they will impede your efficiency at work. Just try to avoid them.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your idea about spending money in order to make improvements around you might be good; however, today is not the day to do it. A sense of urgency clouds your good judgment.

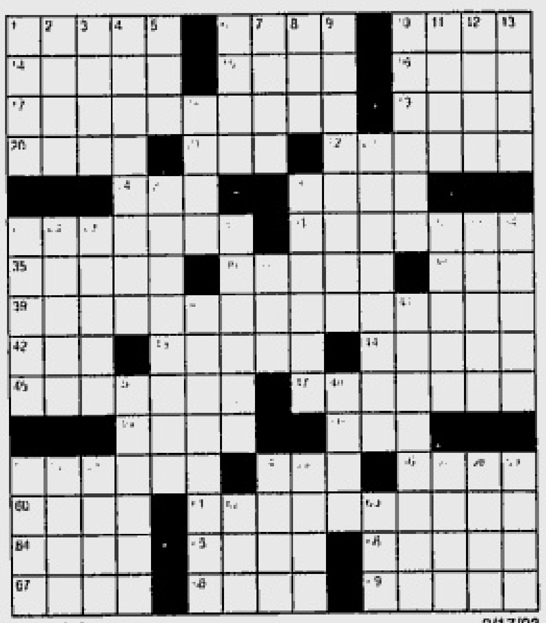
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Expect intense encounters with others today because you feel emotionally involved about something. Guilt, jealousy and possessiveness could make you want to be in control.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): It's hard to see yourself clearly today. You have an unconscious desire to control everything around you. Because of this, try to avoid making important decisions.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your ideas to make improvements or reform methods at work might be good. But today is not the day to try to introduce them.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You have to learn to accept your friends for who they are. Hopefully, they will extend this same courtesy and generous spirit to you as well.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By A.J. Santora
North Grafton, MA

9/17/03

ACROSS
1 __ Jaw, Saskatchewan
6 Distinct musical tones: abbr.
10 Passes away
14 Take on as one's own
15 Verdi heroine
16 Tan shade
17 Pea
19 Evening in Paris
20 Sharp
21 Approves
22 Former Dolphin running-back
24 Disney dwarf
26 Conduit
27 Two-piece suits
31 Clotho's cohort
35 Concerning
36 Mediterranean island
38 Yes, Yves
39 Beans
42 No longer in the bus.
43 Moray catcher
44 Chop into tiny bits
45 Fundamentally
47 Gave in
49 Some evergreens
50 '60s radical org.
51 Part of Nigeria
54 Vichy or Ems
56 Lanky
60 Ms. Chaplin
61 Cabbage
64 Of the ear
65 Bakery worker
66 At the center
67 Curly-leafed vegetable
68 Au naturel
69 Rental agreement

DOWN
1 Cover up
2 Garfield's dog
3 Move like molasses
4 Exhausting
5 '40s arena
6 Carrier bag
7 Spanish uncles
8 Vladimir Nabokov novel
9 Indian port
10 1539 Florida visitor
11 PC image
12 __ the Red
13 Chapter of the Koran
18 Centering points
23 Left abruptly
25 Broadcasting
26 Roger of The Who
27 Port of Iraq
28 Cove
29 One of the Carradines
30 Small silvery fishes
32 Ezra of poetry
33 Light weight
34 Located
37 NYSE competition
40 Maryland player
41 Sharpener's block
46 Wipe out
48 River through Munich
51 Literary volume
52 Very small amount
53 Blue dye
54 High-tailed it
55 French father
57 Dancer Pavlova
58 Spike and Brenda
59 Ancient instrument
62 Puncture starter?
63 Acad. type

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

G	I	S	T	■	S	C	O	T	■	A	G	L	O	W
O	S	L	O	■	A	L	L	Y	■	B	L	A	K	E
A	L	A	N	■	S	E	E	N	■	A	E	R	I	E
D	E	V	I	L	S	F	O	O	D	C	A	K	E	■
■	■	■	■	Y	E	S	■	■	R	U	N	■	■	■
P	L	A	C	I	D	■	P	A	Y	S	■	P	O	W
H	O	G	A	N	■	O	A	H	U	■	N	A	N	A
A	W	I	N	G	A	N	D	A	P	R	A	Y	E	R
S	E	N	T	■	V	E	R	B	■	E	V	E	N	T
E	R	G	■	B	A	S	E	■	B	R	E	E	D	S
■	■	■	P	O	I	■	■	B	R	A	■	■	■	■
■	C	H	A	R	L	I	E	S	A	N	G	E	L	S
S	H	A	R	D	■	A	V	I	V	■	N	A	I	L
H	E	S	S	E	■	G	I	D	E	■	A	C	M	E
E	T	H	E	R	■	O	L	E	S	■	T	H	A	W

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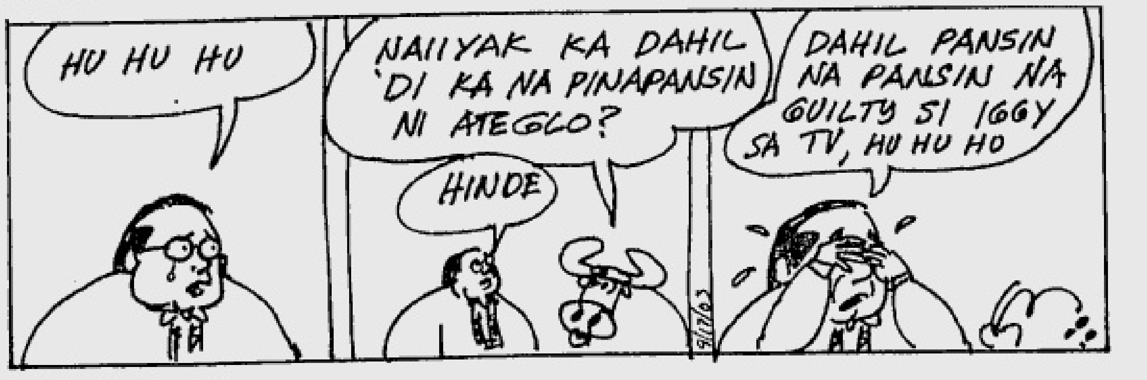
9/17/03

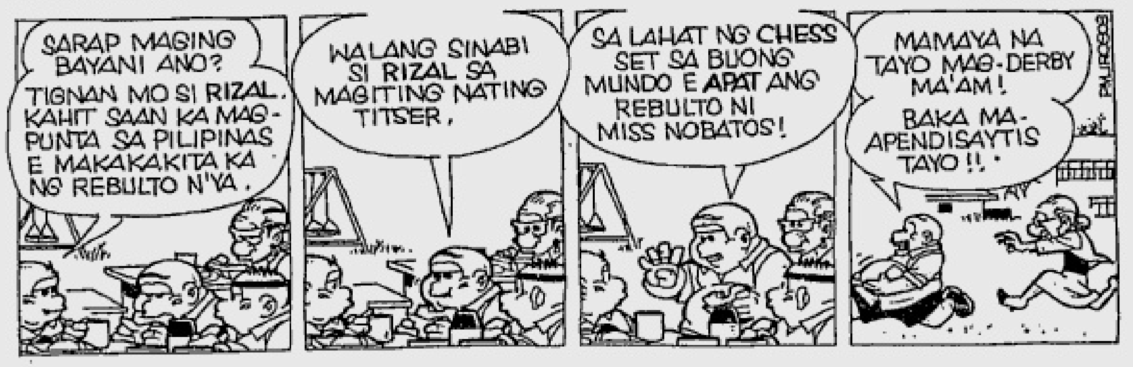
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HU HU HU
NAIIYAK KA DAHIL 'DI KA NA PINAPANSIN NI ATEGLO?
HINDE
DAHIL PANSIN NA PANSIN NA GUILTY SI IGGY SA TV, HU HU HO
9/17/03

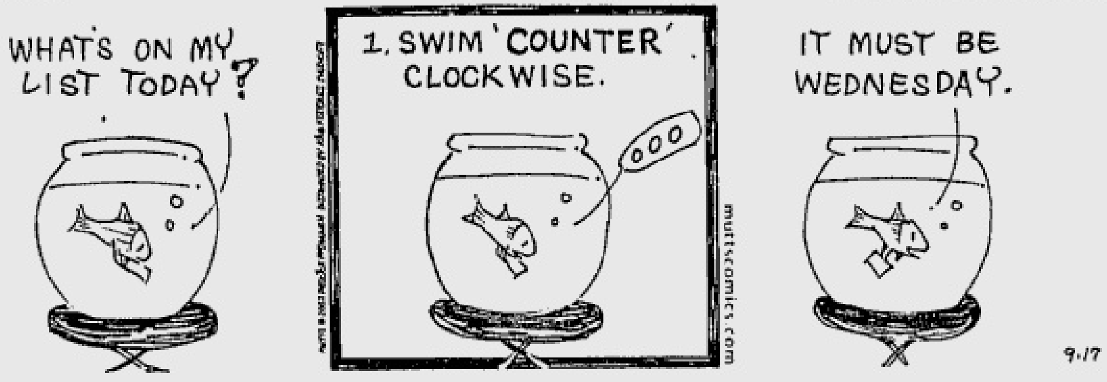
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SARAP MAGING BAYANI ANO?
TIGNAN MO SI RIZAL. KAHIT SAAN KA MAGPUNTA SA PILIPINAS E MAKAKAKITA KA NG REBULTO N'YA.
WALANG SINABI SI RIZAL SA MAGITING NATING TITSER.
SA LAHAT NG CHESS SET SA BUONG MUNDO E APAT ANG REBULTO NI MISS NOBATOS!
MAMAYA NA TAYO MAG-DERBY MA'AM!
BAKA MA-APENDISAYTIS TAYO!!
AY

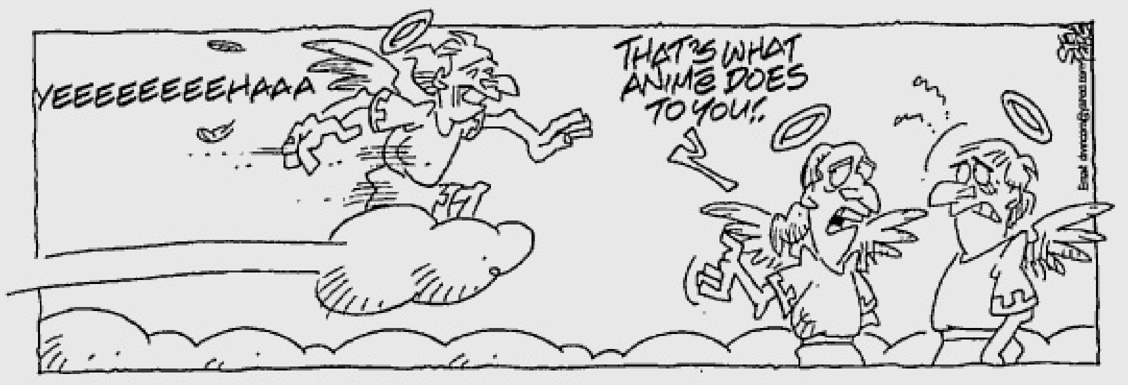
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHAT'S ON MY LIST TODAY?
1. SWIM 'COUNTER' CLOCKWISE.
OOO
IT MUST BE WEDNESDAY.
muttscomics.com
9-17

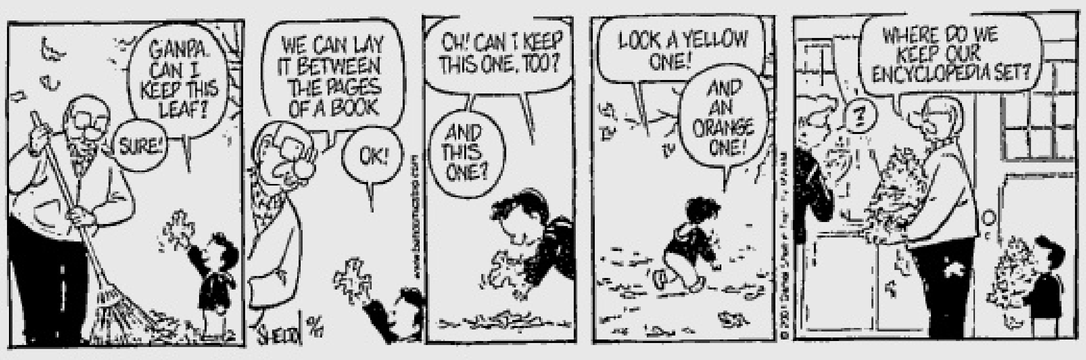
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


YEEEEEEEEHAAA
THAT'S WHAT ANIME DOES TO YOU!

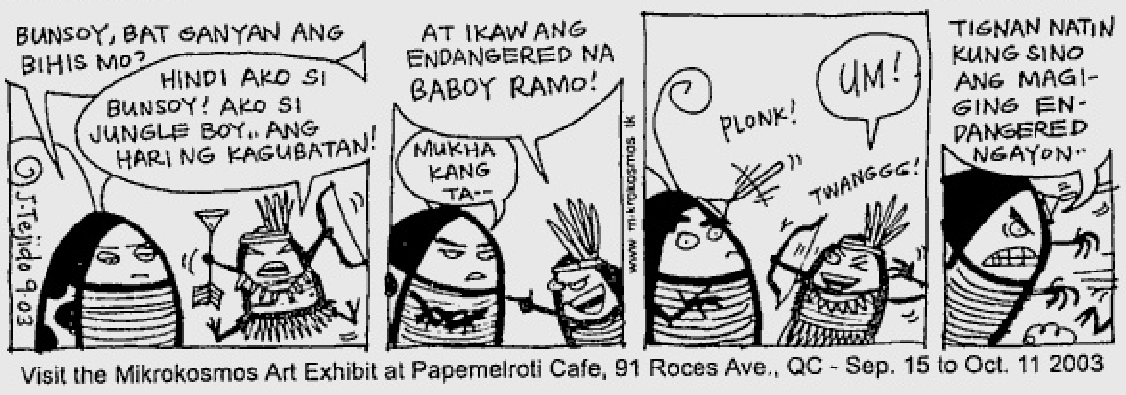
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GANPA. CAN I KEEP THIS LEAF?
SURE!
WE CAN LAY IT BETWEEN THE PAGES OF A BOOK
OK!
OH! CAN I KEEP THIS ONE, TOO?
AND THIS ONE?
LOOK A YELLOW ONE!
AND AN ORANGE ONE!
WHERE DO WE KEEP OUR ENCYCLOPEDIA SET?
?

MIKROKOSMOS

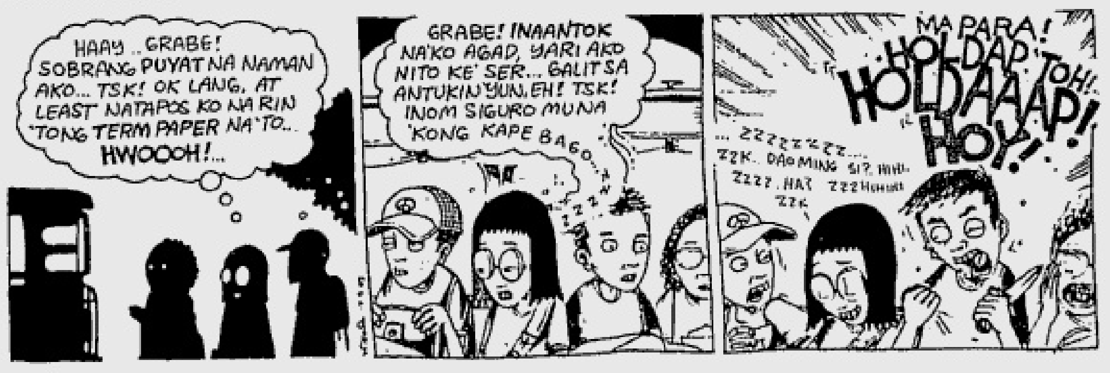
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BUNSOY, BAT GANYAN ANG BIHIS MO?
HINDI AKO SI BUNSOY! AKO SI JUNGLE BOY.. ANG HARI NG KAGUBATAN!
J.Tejido 9.03
AT IKAW ANG ENDANGERED NA BABOY RAMO!
MUKHA KANG TA--
www.mikrokosmos.tk
PLONK!
UM!
TWANGGG!
TIGNAN NATIN KUNG SINO ANG MAGIGING ENDANGERED NGAYON..

Visit the Mikrokosmos Art Exhibit at Papemelroti Cafe, 91 Roces Ave., QC - Sep. 15 to Oct. 11 2003

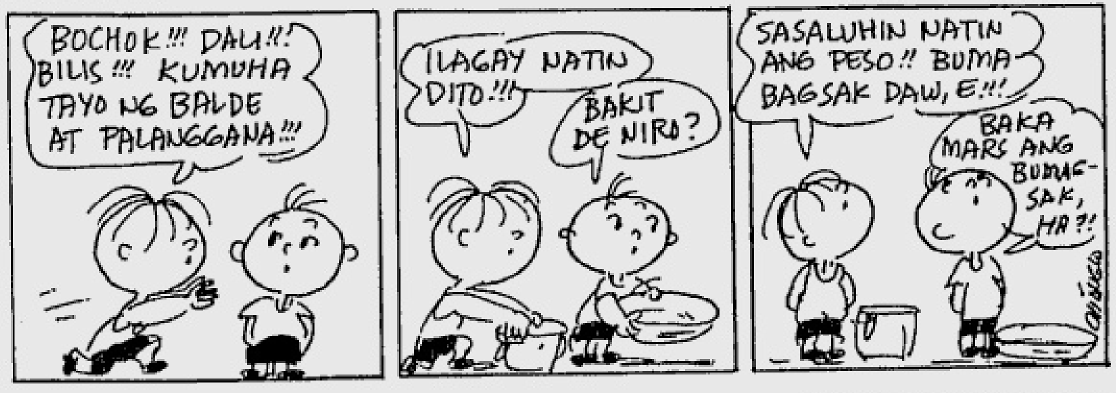
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HAAY.. GRABE! SOBRANG PUYAT NA NAMAN AKO... TSK! OK LANG, AT LEAST NATAPOS KO NA RIN 'TONG TERM PAPER NA 'TO.. HWOOOH!...
GRABE! INAANTOK NA'KO AGAD, YARI AKO NITO KE' SER... GALIT SA ANTUKIN YUN, EH! TSK! INOM SIGURO MUNA 'KONG KAPE BAGO...
MA PARA! HOLDAP TOH! HOLDAAAP! HOY!!
... ZZZZZZZZ... ZZK.. DAOMING SI?. HHH.. ZZZZ. HAT ZZZHHHH ZZK

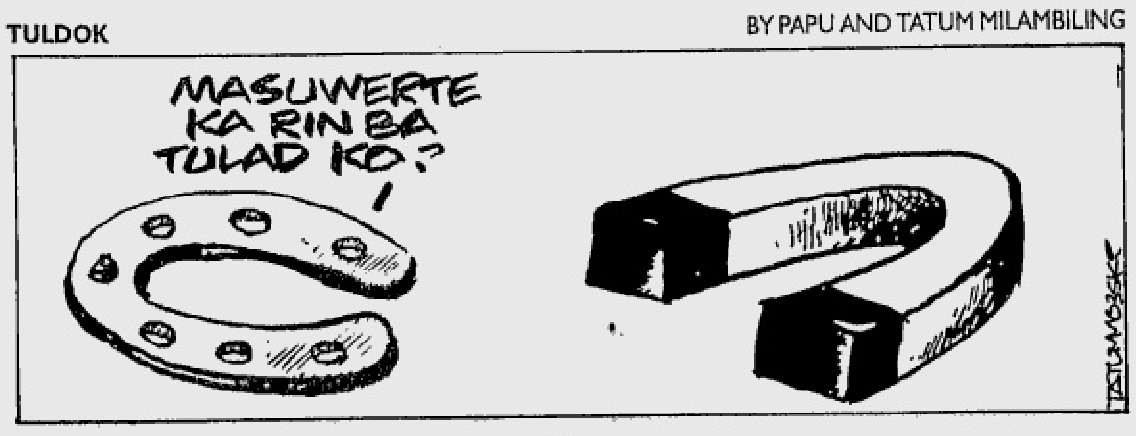
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


BOCHOK!!! DAU!! BILIS!!! KUMUHA TAYO NG BALDE AT PALANGGANA!!!
ILAGAY NATIN DITO!!!
BAKIT DE NIRO?
SASALUHIN NATIN ANG PESO!! BUMABAGSAK DAW, E!!!
BAKA MARS ANG BUMAGSAK, HA?!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


MASUWERTE KA RIN BA TULAD KO?

On my own, but not exactly alone

Filipinos may be on their own in a foreign country but there are always relatives and friends ready to help

By Lisa S. Marfori Sobreviñas
2bU! Correspondent

THE BEST thing about traveling alone for the first time is that, as you try to figure out where you're going, you also get to know yourself.

Actually, the first time I traveled by myself (meaning "without my family") was when I was 12. I joined a foreign exchange program and I went to England with other boys and girls around my age, plus three chaperones, so that didn't really count.

But last summer, at the age of 19, I flew to Vancouver, British Columbia (BC), Canada all by myself.

It was a pretty expensive adventure, it gave me priceless lessons and memories. My family actually left for Canada ahead of me so they also came home first after we spent four days together in BC.

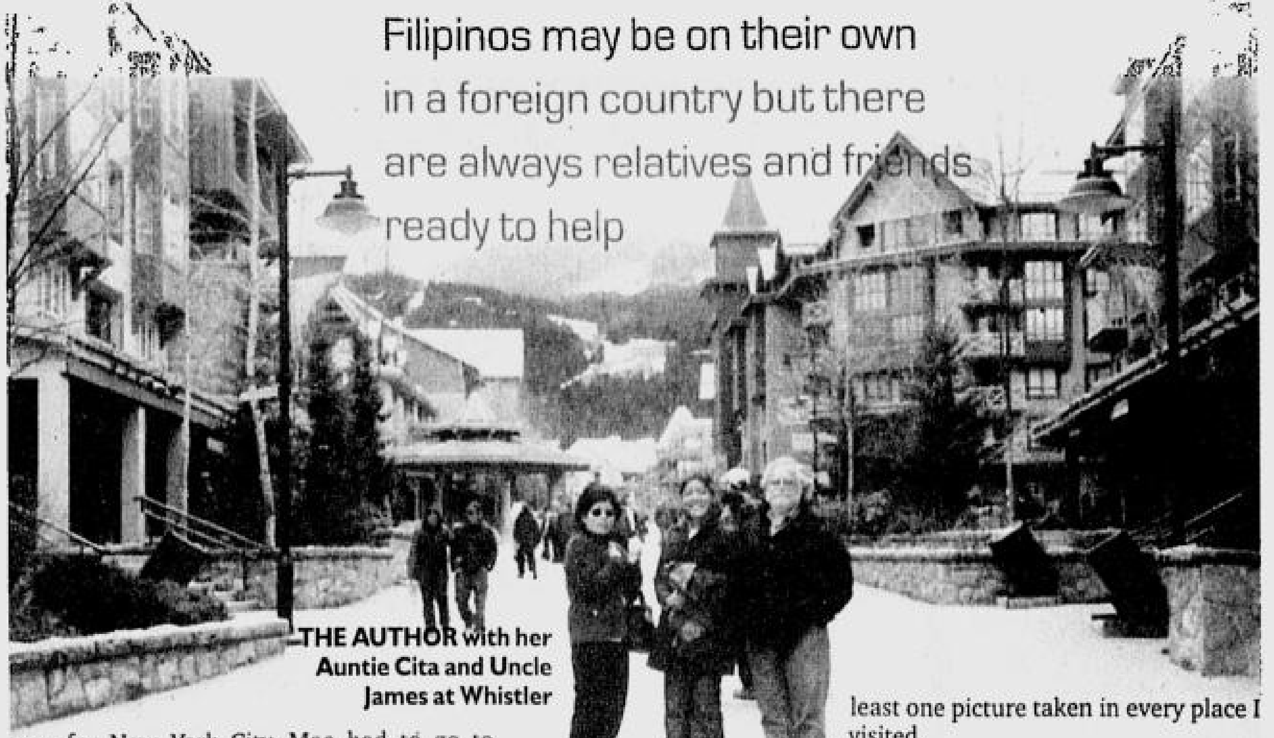
Since I was staying with relatives, being alone in BC did not scare me.

Alone in New York

I called up my childhood best friend, Mae, in Yonkers, New York, then decided to visit her, not having seen her for years. It was then I started to feel truly on my own starting at the airport in Richmond, BC. I had to take two connecting flights via Seattle and Chicago to get to the Newark Airport in New Jersey.

Mae and her mom, Tita Emma, were there to meet me. We arrived at their house late at night. In the morning, Mae and I took the subway for New York City. Mae had to go to school and to work, so I explored New York City all by myself. It wasn't my first time in the Big Apple, but it sure was my first time there on my own.

AT BLOOMINGDALE'S. The author tries something she'd never do in Manila—get a makeover at a mall!


THE AUTHOR with her Auntie Cita and Uncle James at Whistler

Mae left me with a map and tips on how to get to places like the New York Public Library and Central Park, after we agreed to meet up later that evening.

I decided to just walk the streets of New York and try to take in as much of the sights and sounds as I could. After several blocks I ended up in Central Park (it was broad daylight so I wasn't frightened). The flowers were in full bloom and kids were all over the place, either on their way to the park's zoo or just running around and enjoying the sun.

Although I enjoyed taking pictures, I wanted to be photographed as well. It was frustrating not having someone to take my pictures.

But I decided it would be a waste not to have photos of my New York visit. I summoned the courage to ask strangers to take my pictures. Luckily, no one refused. Some even choreographed my poses.

I went to landmarks like the Radio City Music Hall, Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, The Plaza Hotel and the Madison Square Garden, making it a point to have at least one picture taken in every place I visited.

TIMES Square lights up the author's night.

Asking strangers became easier. I overcame my shyness, thinking what Filipinos usually say, "*Pakapalan lang ng mukha yan!*"

Adventures

In my first few days in New York, I was very excited. I got a free makeover at Bloomingdale's, something I'd never do here in Manila. I walked many blocks to get to places like the Museum of Modern Art and the United Nations (where Tita Emma works) because it was good exercise, it saved me a lot of money and I got to see more of the city.

Later, I would realize that traveling alone could be lonely. There was no one to share your thoughts, your excitement, your expenses and all your other feelings with. You did not even have anybody to blame when you got lost.

So while being alone during the day was fun, I enjoyed my evenings more. Mae took me to see "Aida" on Broadway where I met her other friends from places like Guyana, Dominican Republic and China. Arvind, one of Mae's close friends, called our little group a mini-United Nations.

Mae and I also saw "Stomp," an off-Broadway production which I really liked because it was hip and interactive.

She took me to a comedy club. I found that American humor just wasn't the same as Filipino humor. At Yankee Stadium, I asked myself why Filipinos were not as crazy over baseball like the Americans.

I also paid a quick visit to relatives in New York. Meeting my dad's cousins and my mom's high school *barkada* made me miss my family so much and wish I was home.

An aunt took me to their place in The Hamptons for a weekend. That was fun, too. One of Dad's old schoolmate invited me to spend the night with his family in Bergenfield, New Jersey, where I spent most of the evening just chatting his youngest daughter who's about my age.

Surrounded by people who reminded me of home, the trip made me value more family and friends back home.

More independent

The trip definitely made me more assertive and more independent. Just asking total strangers for information and direction developed my confidence. Asking strangers for directions was also a humbling experience.

I saw more of the world and other cultures as well. Text messaging isn't as big in New York and Vancouver as it is in the Philippines. I was without a cell phone and would have trouble getting in touch with Mae or my cousins if I got lost or something happened to me.

Traveling alone also made me a more disciplined person. I had to watch my expenses and make the most of everything. I also learned how to read maps better. I gained more faith in myself and became more willing to take risks.

It also strengthened my faith in God. I couldn't help but be awed by the snow-capped mountains in Whistler and the beautiful flowers in Victoria. It always amazes me how we get to see and discover the beauty of God's creation in other countries except our own.

In New York, everyone seemed to be rushing off somewhere while in BC, life was more slow-paced and one could literally take the time to smell the flowers.

Indeed, the best thing about traveling alone was, trying to figure out where to go, made me figure out who I was as well.

Mon premier voyage à Paris

From page D1

There were five of us on the trip—four girls and one guy. We didn't know anyone in Paris and had no idea where our hotel was located. When we landed, we were still debating whether to take the airport shuttle (which was cheaper but would require a bit of walking to the hotel from its stop) or the taxi (which was highly expensive but would take us directly to our hotel).

A Filipina working at the airport took one look at us and told us to take the taxi, because she said we looked like the ultimate tourists—giant luggage, laptops, hand-carried stuff and all. There was no doubt, she said, that we would be mugged.

In the cab, I drooled over the cosmopolitan sights of Paris, but was also amazed to see so much graffiti! Postcards and books had always painted Paris to be all chateau-ish and clean.

After dumping our stuff at the hotel, we walked over to Monoprix, one of the leading supermarkets in Paris, to buy bottled water and some of the most divine crepes and chocolate wafers I have ever tasted.

Mattel, Miko and Myma decided they were too tired to venture further, so around 11 p.m., Elga and I went to take a stroll around our area. And boy, did our 15-minute stroll stretch to two hours!

We went to Virgin Megastore, which, apart from music, also sold books and school supplies and even had a little coffee shop downstairs. Throngs of people sipped their drinks al fresco, chatting and drinking merrily as though the night would never end.

Elga and I didn't even have a map with us; we just kept walking and walking until eventually we saw the glowing golden lights that looked like the Louvre. We eagerly ran to the museum—there it was. Our jaws dropped in amazement at the sight. We had heard so much about the Louvre, but to be within spitting distance of its famous glass pyramid was incomparable.

We also saw the Arc de Triomphe from a distance, as well as the Eiffel Tower which made us shriek like giddy little girls. We stood there gawking and taking pictures like the ultimate tourists. We seriously could not bring ourselves to go back to the hotel!

Attractions

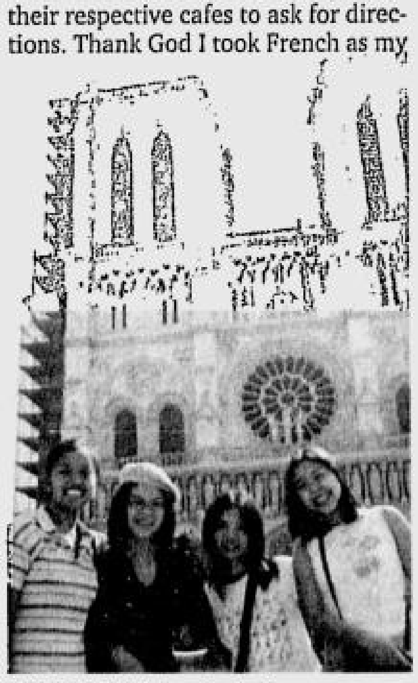
Our hotel package deal included a city tour around Paris, but disappointingly, it was just a bus tour with our tour guides being cassette tapes and headsets (though in fairness, just the sight of the usual tourist attractions—the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, the Bastille, the National Assembly, Champs Elysees, Notre Dame Cathedral, Madeleine Church, etc.—already fascinated me very much).

We bought two-day unlimited Metro passes and decided to figure out how to get around Paris on our own with a map. I also met up with my uncle, aunt and my cousins (who also happened to be in town for vacation) for dinner at the exclusive Buddha Bar, where it was necessary to make reservations just to get a table. All I can say is, it had the best calamares and raspberry cheesecake ever.

Our other highlights included attending mass at the beautiful Notre Dame Cathedral, touring the Louvre and going up the first flight of the Eiffel Tower. Paris was so beautiful and romantic that while couples frolicked in the streets in each other's arms, the five of us could only watch and let out sighs of wishful thinking.

On our last night, I went off to meet up with my cousins at their hotel. I didn't want to pull out my map because it was the obvious tourist giveaway and I was afraid I'd be preyed on, so I attempted to find the hotel on my own.

Eventually, I had to ambush a random decent-looking man on the street and two waiters closing down their respective cafes to ask for directions. Thank God I took French as my foreign language!


NOTRE DAME cathedral serves as a backdrop for these wide-eyed tourists.

MATTEL, Elga, Myma and the author in a group hug in front of the Louvre

Since I had made friends with the guys who worked at the hotel (part-time students working for the holidays), they let me sit by the front desk and use the Internet on their main computer (though the keyboard really made me lose my temper because it was French and all the characters were different).

I took their place in pushing the entrance button to let the guests in and greeting them all "Bon soir" (good evening), which I really, really enjoyed. I had a lot of fun talking to the guys who worked at the hotel, practicing my lousy French, and hearing more about France from the point of view of the locals.

Friendly

We came to Paris just after the horrible heat wave, but it was still hot. It got to the point where we would all complain that we were sweating "like pigs" (though admittedly, the weather got pretty cool at night). What surprised me, though, was how friendly the French people were; most of the people we ran into would usually smile and greet us with a "Bonjour," even the commoners. Now who told me all those stories again about the French being so rude and arrogant?

It was my first time in Europe, and my first time abroad without an adult chaperone, in a continent so far away. We had to learn to budget and hide our money (we all wore money-pouches under our shirts), figure out the maps to get around by Metro, and learn to compromise in order to get what everyone wanted (some of us were day persons, after all, and some were night owls, and we never could agree on a common place to check out).

In the end, the five of us were not only able to visit one of the most beautiful cities in the world, but we became stronger, better friends.

E-mail the author at chloe_dominique@yahoo.com

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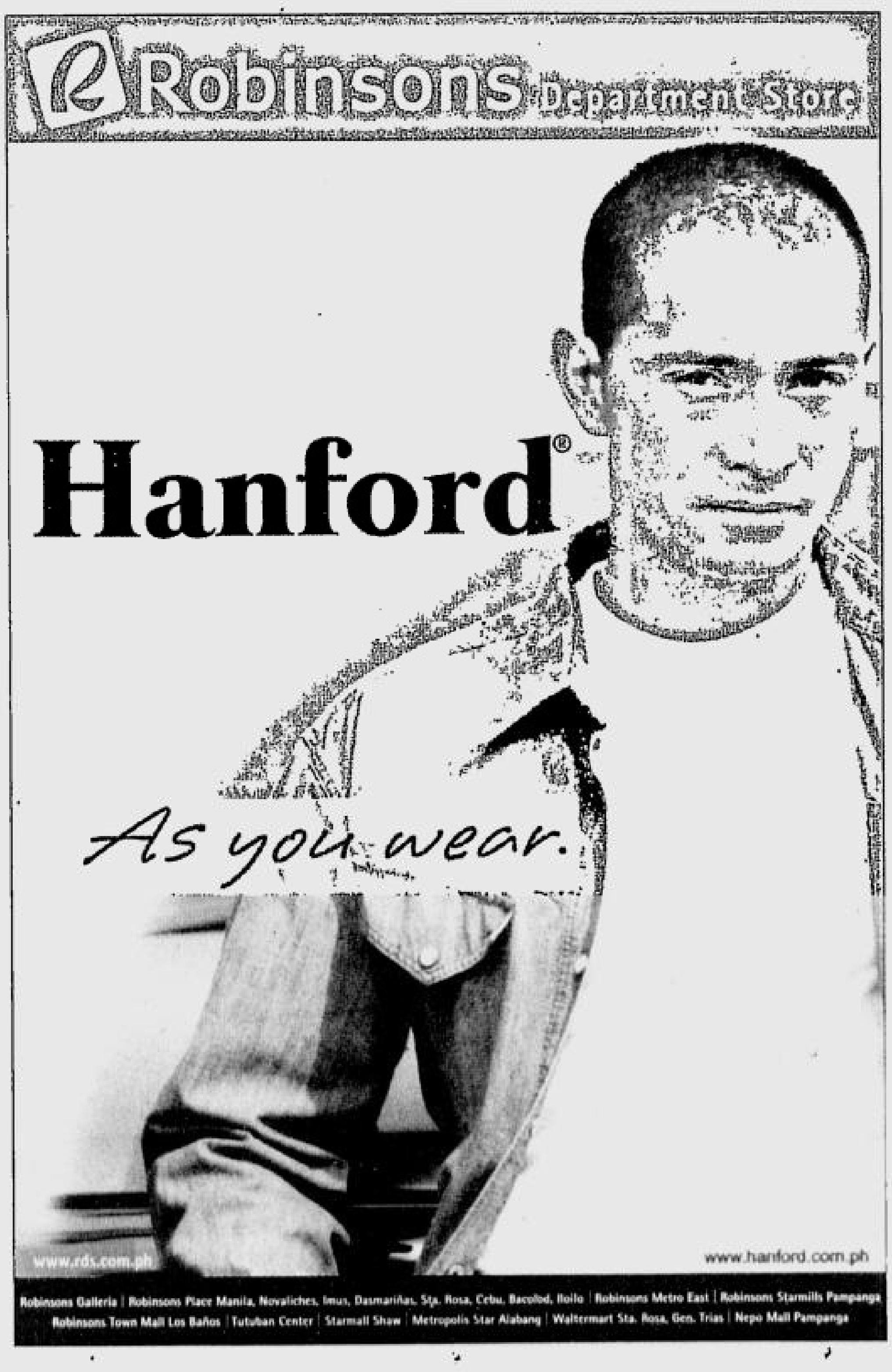
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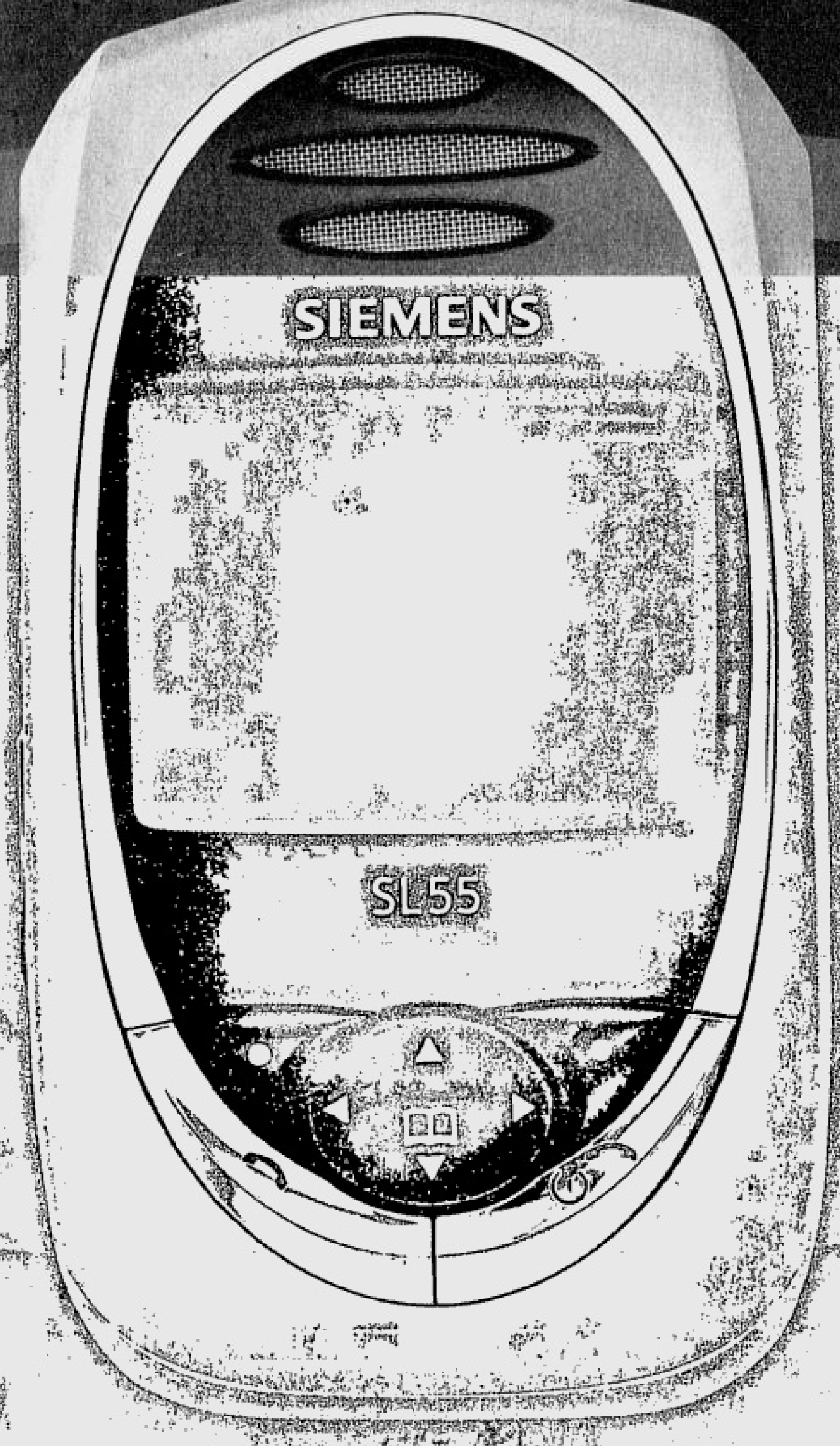

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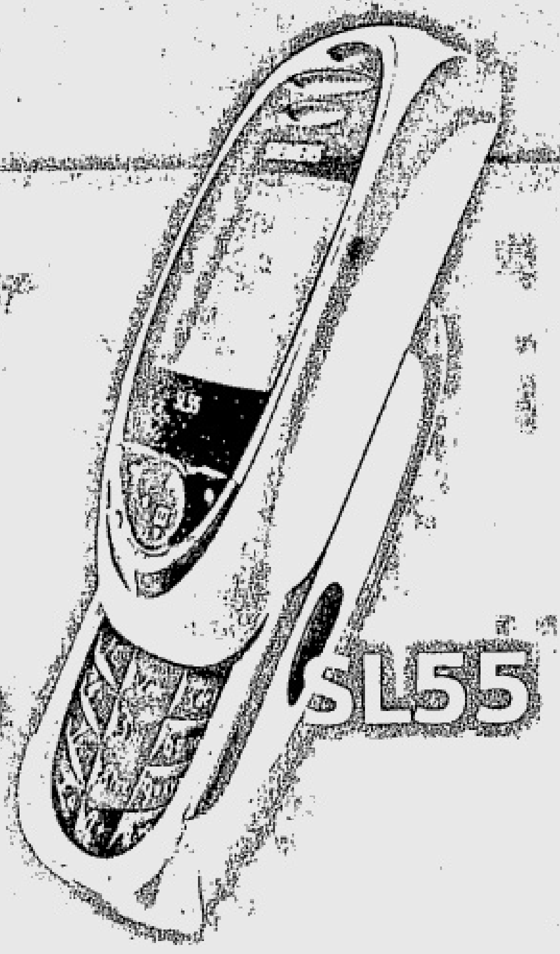

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Falling for Abby

My first time to fall in love with a girl was also my first big heartbreak

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

By Amy Rodriguez
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN I first sat down to write this article, I was in the middle of a beautiful relationship. I was starry-eyed, the whole world seemed marvelous and I was insanely happy.

It was going to be easy. All I had to do was write about how amazing the whole experience was. What it was like for a straight woman to suddenly fall for another woman. The only difficult part I perceived then was trying to stop myself from being sickeningly mushy, to stop myself from gushing.

But I had reasons to gush. The woman I fell in love with was vibrant, beautiful, strong, outspoken, bold, loving, thoughtful. She was magic. She was special. And she was the best kind of special—the kind who didn't realize how special she was.

She was so special that she made me want to change my norms. She led me into a completely different world.

I've always been attracted to men. I've dated more than my share, and I never thought I'd end up with another woman. Sure, I went to an all-girls school where same-sex relationships were common, but I never really gave it a shot.

When she walked into my life, I didn't realize she was about to make some drastic changes. I had no clue that she was about to make me fall for her in ways I've never fallen before.

And when I realized that I loved her, really, really loved her, there was no drama, no dilemma. I waited for the moment when I was sure, when I couldn't hold it in anymore, and then I told her.

We were madly happy.

When people heard the news, they had different reactions.

"I knew you had it in you!" one friend said, looking at me with pride, like I had just won a contest.

"*Sabi ko na eh!*" another said, leaving me wondering why they didn't warn me if they knew it was coming.

Some people wanted to understand. They asked me why, and I answered plainly. Love

FALLING/ E3

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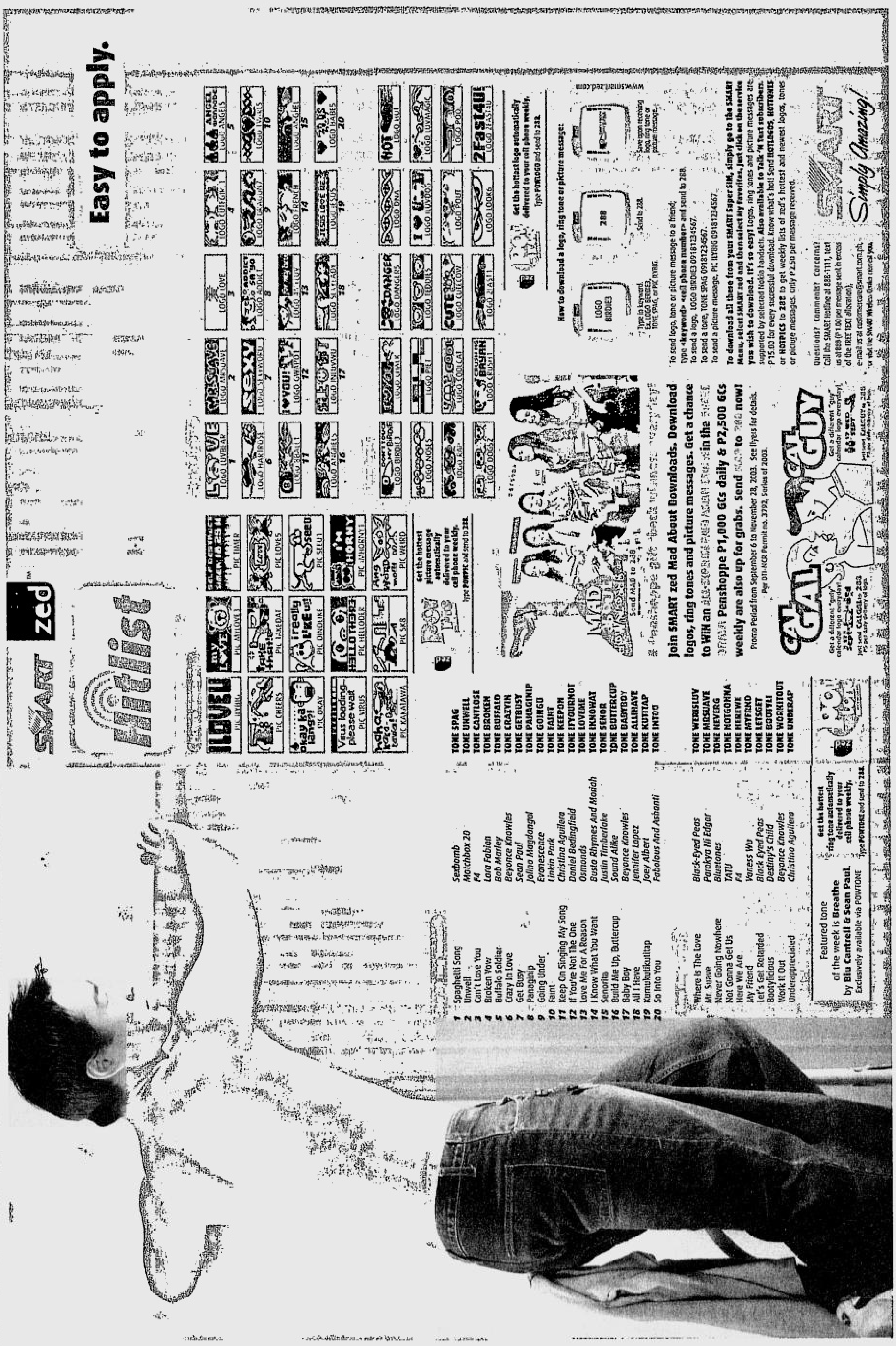

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Misadventures on the mat

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

AS a kid in the '90s, I grew up watching Tagalized Japanese TV series—"Voltes V," "Bioman" and nearly every tech show whose heroes came in fives.

Like everyone else, I watched those shows not just for the storylines, but also for the martial arts scenes—photo-op poses, high-flying kicks and all.

After years of living in that childhood fantasy, I decided to join the martial arts bandwagon and by enrolling in a taekwondo class. That was seven years ago—I was 13 then, fresh out of grade school and was sick of years of art class during the summer. It was time to do something new.

Most of the time, it felt quite awkward to refer to the place where we held our lessons as the "dojang," especially since classes were held in a mall during that time. It was a small space—no more than 30 sq m—and carpeted with rubber safety mats like those you find in indoor playgrounds. One wall was actually made of glass, which made it easy for passersby to observe us like people watching fish in an aquarium.

The outfit I was provided with was your typical white martial arts uniform, not unlike what they wear in karate and aikido. The belt was also white—the color for beginners—and had to be tied in a certain knot.

The sleeves were long enough to cover my fists, but the pants legs, unfortunately, barely covered my ankles in spite of my attempts to stretch it. Great, I thought, I was going to my first lesson in an ill-fitting uniform.

Youthful adrenaline

Like a typical student on her first day of school, I surveyed my classmates. Most were little kids, probably enrolled by their parents to channel youthful adrenaline to a good cause.

They were little tykes who were about as tall as their belts were long, and who wouldn't let go of their moms and dads. About a third of the students were my age, and thankfully, they also knew nothing of taekwondo.

After a usual introductions, our three teachers arrived. (We never called them *sensei* or master; it was always just "sir.") One of them already had a fourth degree black belt. He had Chinese characters embroidered in gold on his belt, which I found strange, since taekwondo originated from Korea.

These men told us to kneel down, bow our heads and pray for a good session. Everything was strictly business from then on. They made us warm up, taught us the stances and made us yell.

I dreaded yelling during every meeting. I always thought it sounded barbaric; something pretentious that you did to make your opponent afraid of you. (I eventually learned that it was a way to put more power into your kicks and release your energy.)

I wasn't alone; my classmates were also responding feebly to our teacher's command. Heck, the 6 year olds yelled louder than we did!

As punishment for this lack of volume, our instructors would always make us do pushups—with our knuckles.

In retrospect, I guess we had it easier; some instructors make their students do them with their thumbs.

Bloopers

Many experiences in my life are remembered for their funny moments, bloopers and misadventures. My first taste of taekwondo was definitely one of these.

Once, when we were lining up to take turns on the kickpad, the little boy in front of me turned around, announced that he was the Pink Power Ranger, and kicked me hard. The pain sent me kneeling on the ground, the breath knocked out of me.

From my view on the ground, I saw the brat's face looming over me with a big satisfied smile on his face. In spite of the urge to squish the little devil, I quickly excused myself and left the room. Restraint, after all, is a virtue taught by martial arts.

Memorizing foundation forms (*poom se*) was initially a problem. There are usually 16 steps per form, and we had a few lessons left before we had our promotion test so we could get our yellow belts. The *standardpoom se* went four steps to the left, four to the right and four steps forward. You make a 270-degree turn and repeat the steps for a total of 16 counts.

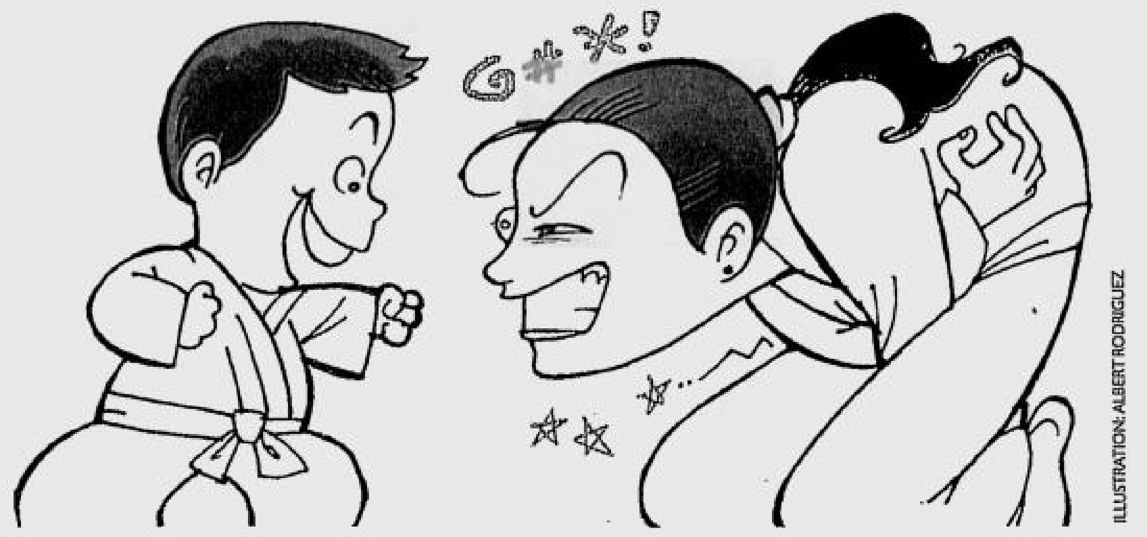


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

To a beginner like I was then, this was quite overwhelming. In a scholarly fashion, I approached this dilemma the same way I memorized information in school: By using mnemonics. And in sheer desperation, I used the unthinkable: The chorus from the Spice Girls song "Spice Up Your Life." (Shake it to the left, lalalala, shake it to the right, something and something, shake it to the front...)

Hey, give me a break: It was the '90s, and I was desperate. Years from now, I'll have to tell my kids that I was able to memorize taekwondo forms using a cheesy song by a now defunct girl group. How pathetic.

Disagreeable

It may strike some people as odd that of all the lessons, sparring was the part I hated most. It wasn't just the possibility of getting hit in the face and losing a tooth that made it disagreeable for me, it was also the absurdity of having to beat up the person you were laughing with two minutes ago.

After a summer's worth of lessons, we were rewarded for our efforts by facing a real taekwondo master for our promotion exam, which included practical tests on forms, defense and an oral test on the basics of taekwondo. Thankfully, white-belters do not have to spar, so I was relieved.

The best thing about the exam was getting a yellow belt to replace the boring white one. But the worst thing? We had to pay for the belt. Talk about capitalism.

Among the things I learned from taekwondo were discipline and endurance. It taught me to push myself a little harder, to go a little further to be able to achieve what I've set out for myself. It showed me weaknesses and abilities that I did not know I had.

It also made my parents more confident in letting me go off on my own. And to those who are thinking of getting their little kids into it, don't be scared: It's not a bloody sport, the worst you can get are bruises. Just warn your offspring not to kick their classmates in the groin.

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com

The first time I lost a loved one to death

By Bunny Anne Gapit
2bU! Correspondent

When I was small,
I used to liking things
that's never really grand, oh no, never, never grand
but not one lived real
exactly as I had in mind
but it's okay, thought I'd still be fine
soon it's gonna show,
the one for me, that one that's really mine...

At 23, I can say I've already lost many games, things, people and dreams. You see, as carried by the lines of the song I wrote above, I'm even prone to losing things I haven't really had.

So just when I thought losing is one tragedy I could just now sleep on, came my father's demise.

My father was the first ever loved one I lost to this biological certainty called death.

I wasn't exactly close to my father, who was adamant and condescending in his strong years. Besides, he never really stayed with us. Instead, he chose to live with a lounge chanteuse-interloper.

But when he became frail and indisposed, he came back to my mother, like a soulmate truly meant for her.

By that time, he was already afflicted with a malady he so loathed. He was always on his rocking chair, rendered a crybaby by the mere sound of sad songs on AM radio.

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

I never really experienced my grandparents on both sides (maternal and paternal). I never was an "apo" to anyone. And up until this time, there had not been anyone in our family with a serious illness.

So it was my father who first demonstrated to me the wear-and-tear of life. It was him who first made me sense the Grim Reaper about to come by.

I remember how I kept away from such a wretched sight as his withering away. I remember how I avoided his stinking corner; how we ignored his pleas for his favorite drink, *buko* juice from the plaza.

And I remember how we consistently declined to go with him on his job-hunting pursuits, unmoved by his intense desire to finally make provisions for us at age 60.

We might seem like ungrateful little brutes for our behavior. There's no question that we didn't know what to do with our father's slow slide to death.

When he finally did go, who should follow him right away but my dear spitz/doberman Tofu. I saw my father cradling Tofu a number of times when they were both still alive, so I guess they made a truce to go together.

My heart was doubly broken because of this—my first experience with death. What made my father's loss all the more difficult was the thought that he hadn't exactly been a good man to us, yet I felt so much hurt when he was gone. I guess love is truly a mysterious thing that can survive even death.

Ignored by her crush

Niño Mark Sablan & September Mabino

DEAR Mark and Sep,

I am 13 years old and a freshman. I have had a crush on this guy since we were in Grade 5. We were close before but now he's ignoring me. What should I do?

MARIAH

I am assuming that the main reason you were close before was because you were pals. I am also assuming that the reason he is giving you the very cold shoulder now is because he discovered your feelings for him.

There are times when all a guy needs from a girl is friendship, and when he finds out you daydream and salivate over him, things can become a little awkward.

Decide how you want him to figure in your life.

Best bud or boyfriend? If it is the latter, find out if he feels anything remotely romantic about you, because if he treats you ordinarily, then it's time to go hunt for fatter fish.

But you're just 13, and I can't believe I'm bringing up the word boyfriend!

So just go and start a light conversation with him and see if it brings back the good old days. If it doesn't and he continues to treat you like a grain of sand in his vast seashore, return the favor. Why waste your time on someone who can't even give you a second?

Go have a crush on other giggle-inducing hotties. Don't deprive yourself of all the *kilig* you could have by being stuck on someone who doesn't even acknowledge your existence.

MARK

If you were really close before, then I guess it's perfectly all right for you to go up to him and say, "Hey, why are you ignoring me?"

But then, not many 13-year-old girls are brave and secure enough to do that.

I'm 100 percent in agreement with Mark about some boys losing interest in girls who like them.

This guy seems to be one of them. And when it is already a matter of personal preference, you really can't do anything to force him to talk to you or to give you the time of day.

You could try striking up a conversation with him about neutral topics, such as school and... well, school.

Then you could eventually bring up some of your old mutual friends, which would hopefully remind him that the two of you were buddies a couple of eons ago. Just take it easy with the conversation and be as pleasant as you can be.

If he still acts cold toward you, then forget him. No matter how likable a guy is on paper—meaning he has all or most of the qualities that you've been looking for—he's not worthy of your admiration if he can't even handle a simple crush.

SEP

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

E-mail the writers at markandsep@yahoo.com

A treat for your crowning glory

Lora Gabol

Submit your hair to a specialized treatment that will restore and maintain its health

AS a you-can't-make-me-wear-a-dress six-year-old, I never really felt pretty unless my hair was done in intricately woven braids or cutesy pigtails. To grow up with *yayas* who could braid, plait and twist hair into every way imaginable, and whose hair know-how could've put Frederic Fekkai to shame (and who could have had lucrative careers in hairdressing with their talent), it was inevitable I would love my hair more than any other part of my body.

Now, as a you-still-can't-make-me-wear-a-dress-unless-I-really-have-to 20-year-old, I don't really feel like I'm at my prettiest unless every strand of hair on my head is in place. This is why, while most girls would head to a nail salon for a hedonistic pampering session, I run to the nearest beauty haven and get myself a hair treatment. And I'm not talking about your regular hot oil.

I would suggest the same for you. Give your tresses a treat and go all out with a specialized treatment from Kerastase Paris, a line of in-salon and at-home hair rituals that will restore and maintain your hair's health even after years of exposure to torturous chemicals.

Visit a Kerastase expert and have your hair assessed, the first step to discovering the perfect treatment for your hair type and its needs.

Kerastase Nutritive (for dry, sensitized hair)

We're all guilty of any one, even most, of these: unnecessary sun exposure, too-frequent brushing, harsh hair products. We are also probably experiencing the ugly symptoms of dry hair. To restore softness, manageability and health, try the Aqua-Oleum instant treatment at a Kerastase salon. This oil-in-water formula nourishes every strand with luxurious oils. It leaves hair shiny, bouncy and light and smelling wonderful, too!

After the treatment, bring home the Nutritive Ritual, a complete set of hair-care products to give your hair the best kind of nutrition. I especially love Masquintense, a rich conditioner you can use once a week. The million-dollar earning girls of "Friends" (Jennifer Aniston, Lisa Kudrow, Courtney Cox-Arquette) are gorgeous living proofs of this great product!

Oleo-Relax (for dry, rebellious hair)

Sick of thick, frizzy, unruly locks and dreaming of smooth, shiny, silky mane? Oleo-Relax is for you. Arguably the best-selling Kerastase product, Oleo-Relax works well and responds to the very needs of Asian hair. Book a session with the newest in-salon treatment, Oleo-Relax Smoothing Concentrated Oil, and leave the salon with hair good enough to be in a shampoo-commercial.

The treatment works especially well with relaxed or rebonded hair that usually appears fried and *walis*-like (we don't want that!). Save up for the Oleo-Relax Ritual to maintain your hair's smoothness and manageability. I'm addicted to Oleo Relax Controlling Care, a leave-on protectant that keeps my hair in place even on the most humid of days.

Kerastase Resistance (for weakened, chemically-treated hair)

I find it ironic that the stuff that are supposed to give us the best hair ever (highlights, color, et. al) are precisely the ones that cause the most damage. We all have to sacrifice a little for beauty, but thanks to Kerastase Resistance, our hair need not suffer that much. If you feel like your hair is beginning to lose its life after your nth switch from chestnut brown to auburn, have a Vitaciment treatment—it resuscitates each and every strand for renewed vitality and body.

Love bodacious babe hair (think Beyonce, J.Lo) and think limp locks are an eyesore? Go a step further and bring home the Volumactive range of products that will pump up you hair's volume and turn you into a bombshell in no time. Use a dollop of Volumactive mousse pre-blow dry for an instant lift.

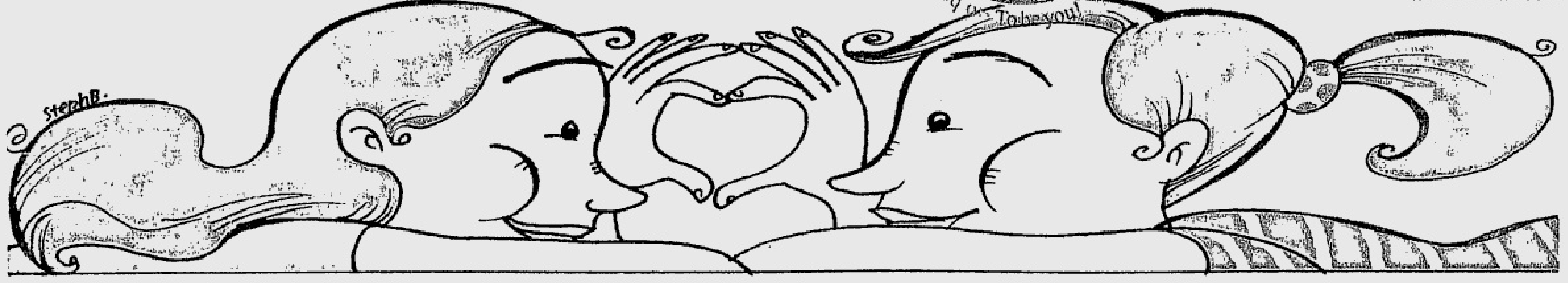
Kerastase Dermo-calm (for stressed scalp and gentle hair treatment)

Is your scalp feeling tighter than your old skinny jeans? Stress never did anyone any good, and its worst effect always showed in the way we look. Translation: dull, lifeless hair. Great hair starts from a scalp in tip-top shape, so give it the attention it deserves with a Dermo-Calmant Massage. The result: healthier scalp, healthier hair, a better-looking (and feeling) you! Forget harsh shampoos with detergents that may damage your scalp and hair. The Dermo-Calm home range is your best bet if you have sensitive scalp.

Kerastase treatments and products are available at Hairbytes, Tinette & Co., Basement, David's salon and other Kerastase salons in Manila.

E-mail the author at pdi_vanityfare@hotmail.com

ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO



Falling for Abby

From page E1

comes in many forms. And in this case, love came in the form of a woman. It was as simple as that.

Big step

"What was it like? Was the adjustment hard?" I was asked too many times.

It wasn't hard. Because I didn't think of it as turning gay. If I thought of the experience as making a big step into another sector of society, as crossing lines or changing sexual preferences, it would have been daunting and I would have been scared as hell.

But I just saw it as falling in love. Falling in love with this single amazing person, not with a whole new gender. Sure, it got nerve-racking at times and my steps weren't always sure, but isn't that how things usually are when you decide to take the plunge into romance? Isn't love always a roller-coaster ride—whether gay or straight?

I faced the surprise of friends and fielded countless questions, but I took everything in stride. Somehow, knowing that she was there with me made me so much stronger. I felt like I could do anything.

Of course, I wouldn't deny that there were differences between having a relationship with a man and a woman. I found it so liberating that we talked about anything—that we discussed emotions freely. And because unlike the men in my previous relationships who let me do all the talking, she had no qualms about expressing what she felt. She told me when I was wrong and, yes, I found that so refreshing.

It was funny how I had to deal with PMS twice a month—but she was adorable when she was cranky. I got a different kind of high when I shopped for her. She was thoughtful and she spoiled me to death. No one had ever done that to me before. She was sensitive, she was sincere, she listened.

Hurting like hell

"That was my first time to fall in love with a girl. It's been beautiful, it's been crazy, it's been magical. And if the universe is on my side, this will be the last time I will fall in love with anyone."

That was the ending of my original article. I wish I can still end this that way.

But I can't.

"I'm female and I have a girlfriend. Actually, saying that out loud still takes some getting used to. The words roll off my tongue like strange beads, sending delicious shivers running up and down my spine."

But I no longer have a girlfriend.

She left me.

I cannot blame her. I've had jealous moments and episodes of paranoia, which is pretty normal for people who have gotten hurt countless times in the past. But I guess they became too much for her to handle. She said she cannot be with someone who doesn't trust her.

But I do trust her. I trust her with my life. I just had a sucky way of showing it.

Somewhere deep inside of me, there's a little part that might even be proud of her, that in leaving me she's actually sticking to her principles. Maybe, when the intense pain goes away, I can start listening to that little part. Maybe I can even be happy for her, happy that she was able to stand up for herself.

Not yet. Because I still love her. I love her in ways I've never loved anyone before. But if leaving her alone and giving her peace is what it would take to make her happy, I would do it for her. Even if it hurts like hell.

I never begged for anyone to stay before, but I tried that with her. She still decided to walk away.

We had built dreams and made plans. Little plans, big plans. We were going to buy cereal together. We were going to travel the world. We were dreaming about a beautiful house with a nice bathroom. We dreamt about going back to school. I wanted to massage her feet and sing to her every night before she went to bed. She wanted to keep planning surprises for me.

For the first time in my life, I saw my future clearly. I had a goal to work for, I had a blueprint for the rest of my days.

It's hard to believe that it's over now.

The first girl I fell in love with was also the first person who broke up with me, the first person who really broke my heart.

I am an idiot. I let her slip through my fingers, let her turn her back, let her slam the proverbial door.

Now all I'm left with is a broken heart, a folder bursting with pictures and a box full of memories of countless firsts with this wonderful girl.

E-mail the author at nevertrythisathome@yahoo.com

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Philippine Science Fair
2003-2004

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DepEd Memorandum No. 244 series 2003 — July 23, 2003

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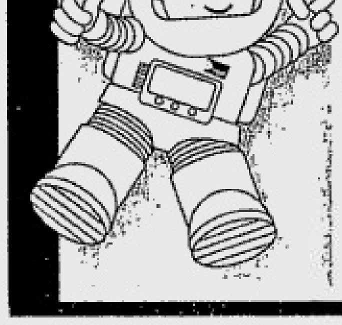

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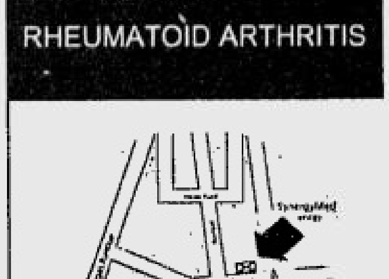

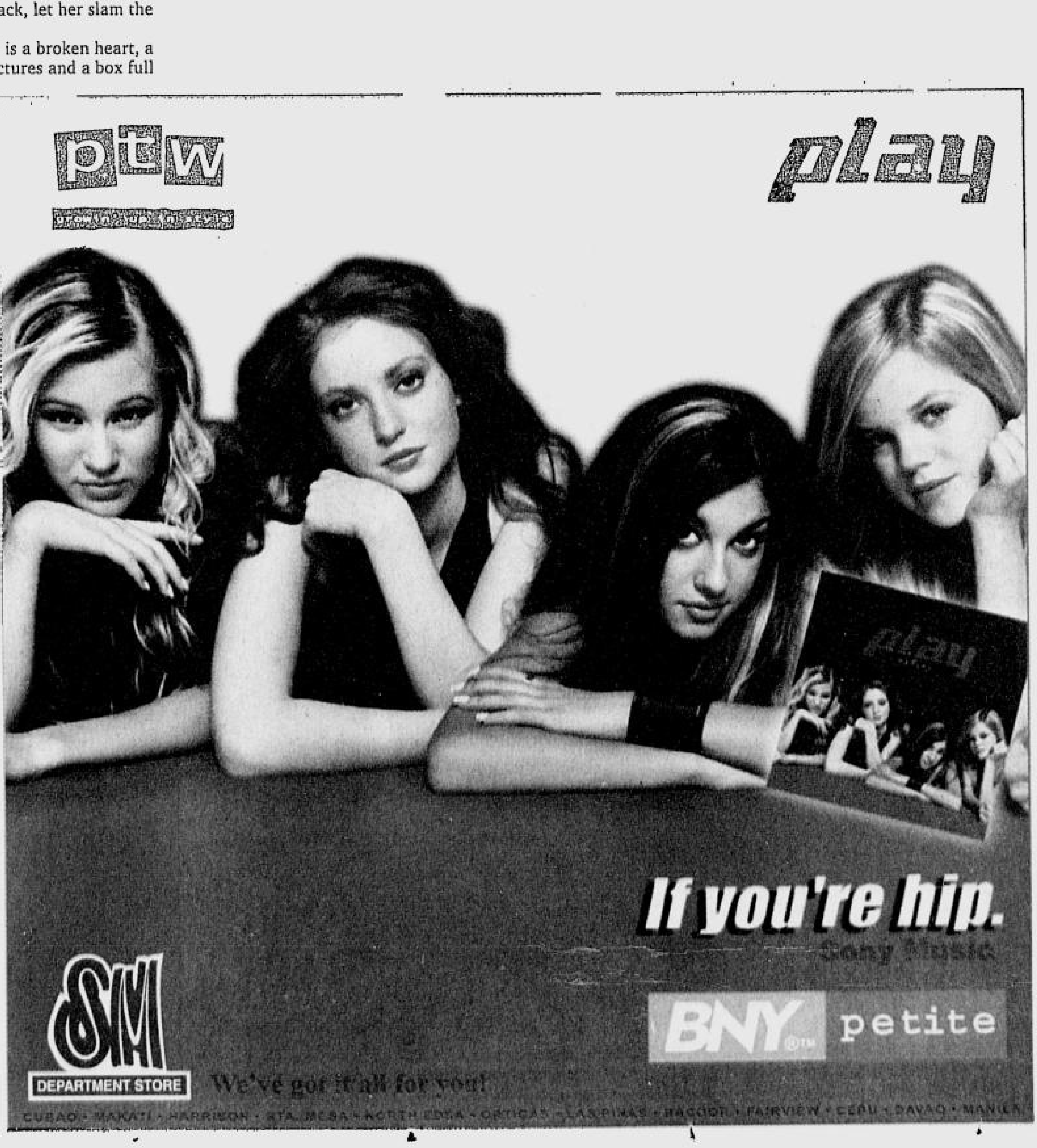

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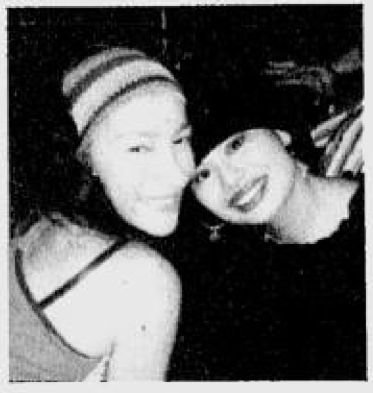
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CANADA CRAVING. Illac Diaz and Kate McArdle

SHOW TIME. Chinggay Andrada and TJ Manotoc

Partying with Bublé and the A List

Tim Yap

"I LOVE the Philippines," **Michael Bublé** was overheard sighing to one of his bandmates, as they took turns jamming by the grand piano of Cheval Blanc, where the after-party of his invitational gala took place.

Earlier at the Meralco Theater, Michael surprised, nay, wowed the audience with his charm. He reprimanded a girl in the audience for taking a picture of him without permission, only to ask her if they could have a picture together (the girl was pretty, too). With that, he jumped into the audience area.

On top of that, when director **Fritz Infante** (who was an active member of the audience, to say the least) screamed, "I love you, Michael!" the singer screamed back, "I love you, too!" He went on to hug Fritz and gave him a peck on the cheek.

Fritz, filled with gratitude, kissed him—right smack lip center. The audience shrieked.

Later, Michael rapped, did a quick boom box set and spoke about his grandfather who, he said, called him "Sunshine." His concert became a roller-coaster of emotions, since he was really a rock star and a comedian disguised as a crooner. Not a few girls (and guys) shed a few tears during the performance.

At the exclusive Makati Shang party, Michael gamely posed, hopped between the guests and sang his favorite songs with his band. **Martin Nievera** also dropped by (with hot date **Cutie del Mar** and buddy **Carissa Cruz**) to congratulate his newfound friend.

Tomorrow night at the PICC, Manila gets another taste of Bublé before he flies out and conquers the rest of the world.

"If I can have as many reasons to come back, I surely will." he said.

We'll be waiting, Michael.

Life is beautiful

The night before, hipsters flocked to Resto 12 (as they always do) where BBC troopers brought in **DJ Bluessabelle**, a petite Aussie chick whose favorite expression was "Beautiful!"

Kara Tolentino, BBC shaker, was telling me that the whole time she and compatriots **Edge Pamute** and **Mike Constantino** were taking DJ Bluessabelle out, all she said was "Beautiful!" with a wide smile and a sincere appreciation of our city's beauty—and that was just from the airport to Makati. (Okay, okay—I'll prove my point later).

I finally met her at the party (which was to inaugurate Cool Mint Listerine strips by Pfizer) and when I talked about what was happening around town, she said it again: "Beautiful!"

And I believed her. Beauty is really relative. It's how we see things that differentiates our appreciation or dislike of stuff. That night, partyphiles of all sectors showed up at the party; downtown met uptown, students mixed with old timers. Other people thought it was too crowded, the mix too diverse.

To me, it was... "Beautiful."

From B-to-A list

Tonight, drop by Absinth for Super's! R&B night. Expect break-dancing boys and sexy gals chilling with **DJ Steve Mills** at the third floor of Greenbelt 3.

On Thursday, it's Cosmopolitan's Bachelor's Bash at the NBC Tent and Michael Bublé's PICC concert. Afterward, hop to Azzuro at Sommerset Hotel on Aguirre St, Makati. Or if downtown Manila is your trip, check out Bed on Maria Orosa St., where Super! gets naughty.

On Friday, it's the big, big launch of Super! at Cats New World Renaissance Hotel, where **DJ Danny Howells** (who's in the worldwide Top 12) spins his music with the scene's favorite shaker, **Tuck Cheah**.

On Saturday, guess who's going to the Tatler ball at the Makati Shangri-La? Only on its second year, the ball attracts the country's chi-chi A setters, with editor in chief **Anton San Diego** and society pillar **Maurice Arcache** leading the feathered flock. "Society should be coddled because there's so little of it left," **Oscar Wilde** said.

Afterward, you may head out to Dream Bar 6750 where **DJ Mano Dario** goes "Circo Loco" as he plays his set with percussionist **Fritz Barth**.

Enjoy the Super! week ahead.

BBC BEAUTIES. Maricar Lim, DJ Bluessabelle and Kara Tolentino

TRENDSPOTTER Gino de la Paz

MODEL'S MODEL. Phoem Barranda

VJ VIVACIOUS. Audrey Tan

ALLURE. Angelu de Leon

M2M. Michael Bublé and Martin Nievera at the Makati Shangri-La

PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

ME and the Cheeky Girls at Cheval Blanc

CLOUD 12. Celine Lopez in Dennis Lustico with Elbert Cuenca

JOEY'S TATLER. Ria Romero and Anton San Diego

CLASSY LADIES. Mary Ann Lumen and Jenny Santi

MOD TRIO. Rachel Soriano, Brian Tan and Jeremy Marquez

MEGA BABES. Liza Ilarde and Cutie del Mar

YELLOW BELLE. Mons Romulo-Tantoco in Dennis Lustico with Michael Bublé

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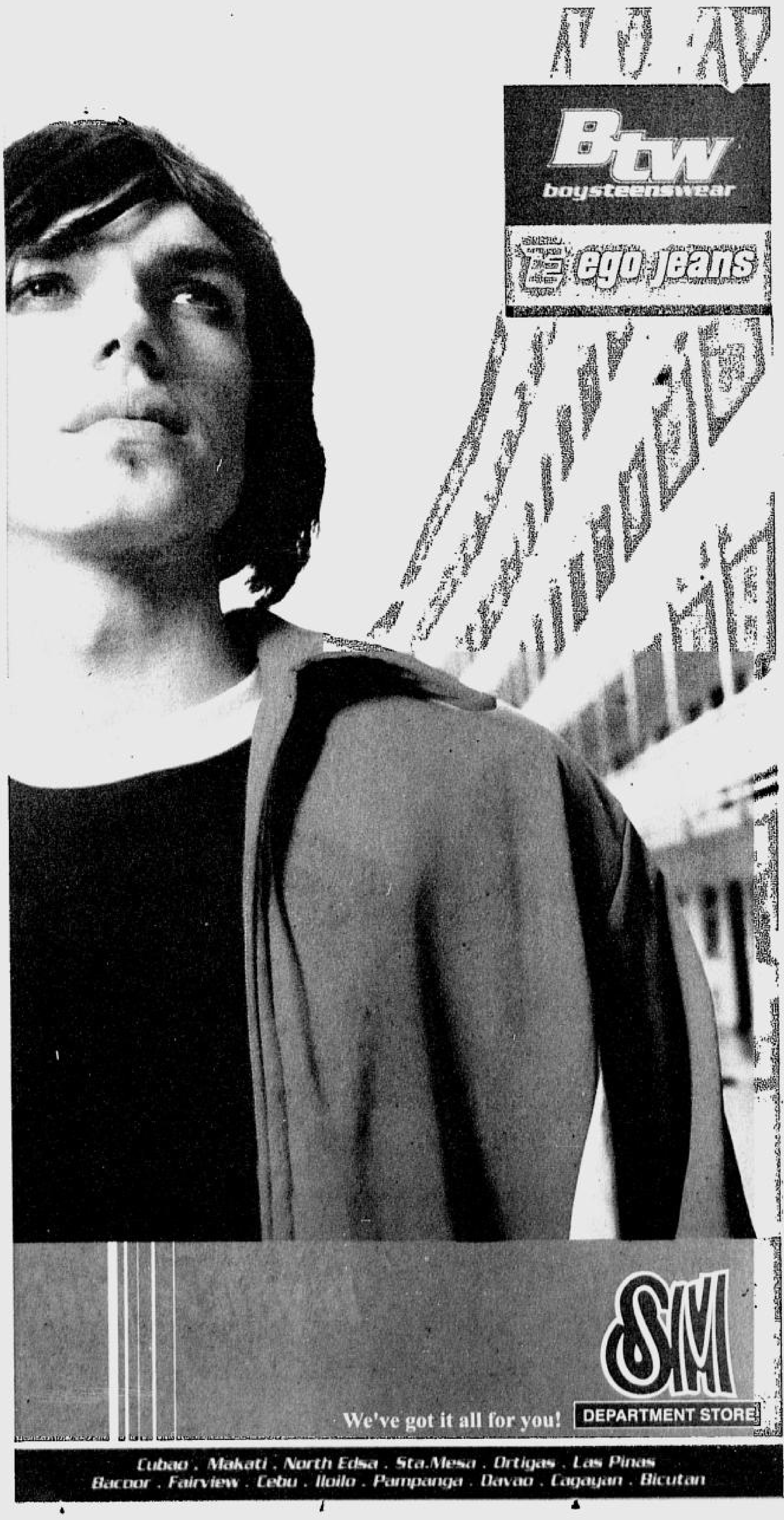
JAMMIN' with JM Rodriguez

THREE TIMING. Jordan and Lani Castro with Atom Henares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FINALS preview? Defending champs Ateneo Blue Eagles and tough contender FEU Tamaraws battle for the top spot.

Four aces in the finals

By Crystal Joy O. Rebucas
2bU! Correspondent

SEASON 66 of the UAAP is now approaching its end with the naming of the final four teams in collegiate basketball—the Ateneo Blue Eagles, Far Eastern University Tamaraws, University of the East Warriors and La Salle Green Archers.

What made these four teams deserving of a seat in the final four? Which two are most likely to go against each other in the finals? And who will most likely win the much-coveted championship trophy? Read on and gauge for yourself.

Ateneo de Manila Blue Eagles

As the league's defending champions, the Ateneo Blue Eagles are strong contenders. Along with this comes the pressure to win again this year. Many, however, are doubtful that the team will be able to repeat its championship finish last season without Most Valuable Player Enrico Villanueva, who has now moved on to the professional leagues.

Another weakness of the team is a lack of a real post threat since both Paolo Bugia and Rich Alvarez like to play facing the basket.

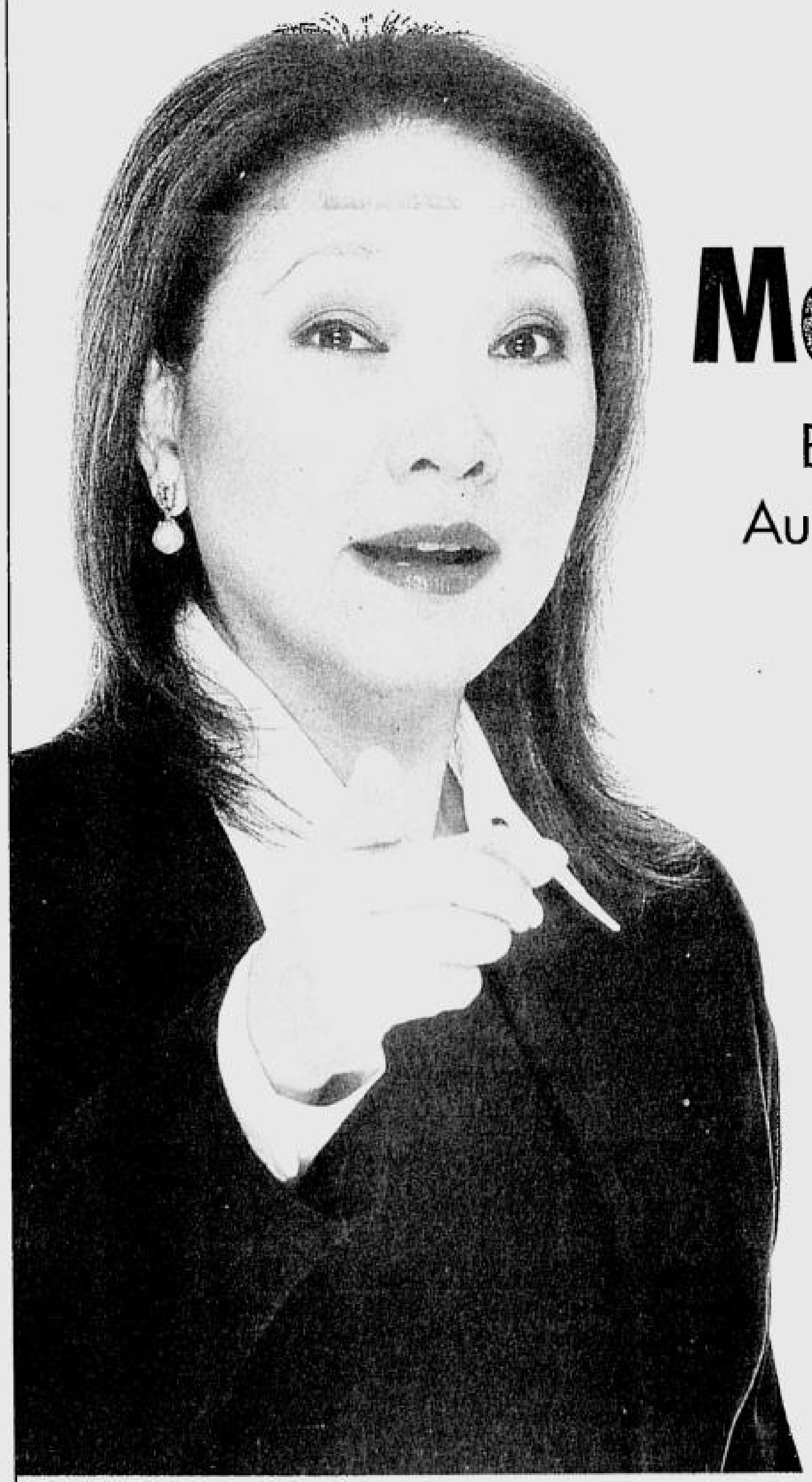
The Eagles started slow this year, as they lost their first two games in the first round. They bowed to the University of the East Warriors—the team they bumped off last season via Gec Chia's miracle shot—in their opening game, then miserably lost to the Philippine Basketball League runner-up finishers Far Eastern University Tamaraws in their second game.

> Will it be the Blue Eagles vs the Green Archers again? How about a 'holy war' between the coaching Banals of Ateneo and FEU? Or will it be the year of the UE Warriors? See you at the games!

Tainting their almost clean win slate in the second round was their loss against cellar-dweller National University Bulldogs, leading people to speculate that the Eagles could lose the championship bid because of their tendency to relax and to be overconfident.

But led by champion coach Joel Banal and co-captains Wesley Gonzales and Rich Alvarez (both playing their last year), and backed up by seasoned players Larry Fonacier and LA Tenorio and rising stars Doug Kramer and JC Intal, the Eagles will surely put up a ferocious fight to grab that

FOUR/ F2



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ATENEO playmaker LA Tenorio dribbles past La Salle's Tyrone Tang.

Four aces in the finals

From page F1

trophy a second time.

Far Eastern University Tamaraws

Fresh from a finals appearance in the PBL, the Tamaraws are proving that they are more than ready to face their UAAP challengers.

They were off to a good start, winning their first three games in the first round. The PBL experience gave them the confidence to beat former champion Blue Eagles by as many as nine points during the first time they went up against each other.

Even if the Eagles beat them in the second round, there is no denying that the height advantage and speed of the Tamaraws can help them beat Ateneo, or any other team for that matter.

Despite their zone defense becoming quite predictable, the Tamaraws, powered by the sweet-shooting Arwind Santos, veterans Gerard Jones, Cesar Catli and James Zablan, and the vast experience of coach Koy Banal, will not hesitate to fight to the end.

University of the East Warriors

The Warriors are basically intact except for the departure of Ronald Tubid, who is now with the PBA. The team's solid composition of veteran players poses a threat to all the other three teams. The fiery Warriors started the season with a victory over the Blue Eagles that tasted like sweet revenge; the Eagles, after all, were the very same team who denied them the finals slot last year.

James Yap, main man for the Warriors, is one of the league's leading scorers, and teammate Paul Artadi is among the leaders in assists. This indicates the overflowing individual talent of this team's players.

The team's game plan, however, is to win as a team, that's why we see other players like Arnold Booker, another prized guard of this mainly offensive team, making low-key but effective contributions.

Given the chance in the finals, the Warriors can make winning the championship look easy, whoever their opponent will be.

De La Salle Green Archers

The rookie-laden Archers can get jittery, and they are inconsistent most of the time. But there is no denying the fact that the young players learn from their mistakes and improve in every game they play.

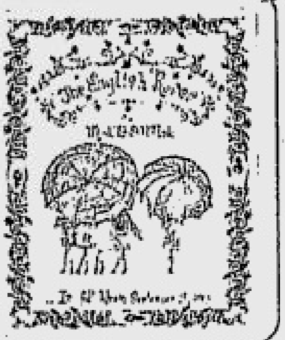
Despite controversies and rumors surrounding Mark Cardona, he still remains the Green Archers' top ace. Manny Ramos and Joseph Yeo are very much present to provide whatever championship experience they can pass on to the young ones like Jerwin Gaco and JV Casio, who are sure to answer the call to make their presence felt in the hardcourt.

The team's standing at the end of the two rounds is far from the stellar performance they had last season. But the Archers are still out there, not giving up, and the young blood in the team can fuel the drive to reclaim the championship from their Ateneo arch-rivals. Coach Franz Pumaren is expected to cook up some formula to ensure that there's no repeat of last year's defeat for the Archers.

F2 concert a shame and a disaster

YUMMY. Try Act II's Kettle Corn and Sweet Corn Microwave Popcorn. Guaranteed to make your DVD marathons even more enjoyable. We are so addicted.

FANS of all things Topshop would be very happy to hear that there's a new branch in Glorietta. Finally, we don't have to troop all the way to Ortigas and Manila for our fashion needs.



MADONNA adds another feather to her cap with the launch of her children's book "The English Roses."

BROTHERS Burgers Hot Chix. If spicy chicken is your thing, try this treat. We just wish the servings were bigger.

THERE'S another batch of castaways to watch as Survivor 7 Pearl Islands premieres on Friday, 1 p.m. on Studio 23. The first episode is bound to be interesting: The contestants got dressed to the nines thinking they were attending a party, only to be asked to jump off a boat to start the game.

HERE COMES THE… SPLIT? Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck have reportedly split up. According to CNN.com, Jennifer was seen in Miami and Ben in Las Vegas after the breakup. We're getting tired of this whole saga. Can they just exchange rings and get it over with?

VENUS and Serena Williams are mourning the death of their sister, Yetunde Price, who was slain in a Los Angeles suburb after a dispute. The 31-year-old woman, the tennis champs' erstwhile personal assistant, succumbed to a chest wound.

PANCAKE House in Pasong Tamo Extension only delivers until 5 p.m. *Ano sila*, office? We want our tacos!

LAST Saturday, two flights from Bangkok and Japan arrived around the same time at the Naia. Exhausted passengers rushed to the immigration area to be able to get out of the airport fast. One woman, presumably a Pinay who arrived from Japan, did not line up and instead made goo-goo eyes at the guard, who was apparently someone she knew. Another guard arrived, walked away with the woman's passport and approached one of the immigration officers. Seconds later, the woman was cleared and breezed out of the area to the annoyance of the tired passengers—all because of a little flirting. If even ordinary creatures have the gall to abuse their power, imagine how big officials overstep thejr limits. It's sickening.

F4 FEVER has become a disease. The Event was a disaster for a lot of people. Security was terribly lax, and there was only one entrance for all ticket-holders. As a result, people who got P500 tickets were able to cross divisions and ended up in the P5000 area, while those who forked over P10,000 for better accommodations ended without seats because others got there before them. F2 only sang six songs. There were more front act numbers. And the worst part: Some fans were injured in a stampede. Shame on the organizers.

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4 Day 4: Super! Ghetto Fabulous!

Celebrities, readers, R&B fanatics, breakdancers, homeboys and fly girls will be taking over Absinth in Greenbelt 3 for a night to remember on Wednesday, Sept. 17, at 10 p.m.

5 Day 5: Super! X-posed

Super! gets naughty on Thursday night, Sept. 18, in Bed, Maria Orosa, Malate. Games and prizes await the wild and the willing.
For your dose of poshR&B, check out Steve Mills at Azzuro@Sommerset, Aguirre Street. Groove amid a plush scene of fun and fab. From 10p.m. onwards.

6 Day 6: The Launch of Super!

This is one Super! weekend you will never forget. Big Fish and Addict mobile, Wrangler, Jose Cuervo bring in international DJ Danny Howells (top 12 in the world) to coincide with the launch of Super! He will be spinning at CATS disco of the New World Renaissance with our very own DJ Tuck Cheah at 10 p.m. After party to be announced. Super! surprises await everyone.

7 Day 7: Super! "Circo Loco" with NBK

DJ Manolet Dario and percussionist Fritz Barth jam with Super! at Dream Bar 6750 at 10p.m. House music, anthems, Latin beats – a free flowing night of fun vibe and fab people.

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2. Be at the gate when it opens on the specified time of the night. (Make sure you're there before the others do.)
3. Register your names to claim your freebies and to be a part of the raffle for the night.
4. Make sure you are identified as a Super! guest so wear your Super! buttons all the time. (Super! buttons will serve as your passport to the other nights.)
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A wacky 'wedding'

By Jason Doplito
2bU! Correspondent

IF YOU'RE in for some animal exploitation, grandma-loving and droppings delights, then you're ready for "American Wedding," the third installment of the hugely popular teen movie "American Pie."

Banking on its predecessor's infamous reputation for combining sexual crassness with humor, the latest film cannot just be outdone. Although pastries aren't victims of yet another adolescent's intense hormones (as in the first movie), hardcore animal lovers might raise a howl over the fact that man's best friend here has become his lover.

But the things you see in this movie are nothing different from what you get to watch on the MTV phenomenal hit, "Jackass," so it may not totally gross out young people who have been exposed to the series.

Perhaps, to even out the immaturity level of the film, the three main characters—Jim Levinstein (Jason Biggs), Paul Finch (Eddie Kaye Thomas) and Kevin Myers (Thomas Ian Nicholas), are finally acting as adults, with Steve Stifler (Seann William Scott) taking on the heavy responsibility of being the lone jerk.

And if only for the amount of disgusting things he endured doing for this movie, Scott definitely takes the trophy for Best Performance.

So what are the guys into this time around? As the title suggests, there's a wedding to attend to, and it's between Jim and her longtime sweetheart, Michelle (Alyson Hannigan). The rest of the boys are out to help them set up the perfect wedding.

Disasters

The dilemma? It has to take place in two weeks, and Stifler has to be out of it. Although it's good that they did not play up the commitment-phobic card, where the groom gets cold feet and runs away for his dear bachelor's life, the other disasters portrayed on the film could hardly qualify as such.

One can only hope so much for the latest installment of a movie made famous by a guy who humped his mom's pie

JUST MARRIED. No pie gets in the way of Jim and Michelle's wedding.

First, they investigate Michelle if she shows signs of backing out. However, the story didn't portray the urgency of this "crisis" since there was no substantial plot to hold up Jim's paranoia. Also, in the latter part of the movie, Jim's parents-in-law instantly warms up to him, despite the major blunder that happened the first time they met.

Perhaps the reason why these small tragedies hardly register is the presence of Stifler. He completely out-grosses any disastrous event that is thrown into the film. Clearly, his essence is the combined extract of the two former American Pie films, plus a couple of Pinoy noontime shows to boot. And this makes him the "star" of the movie.

Meanwhile, the rest of the boys are relegated to second- and third-supporting roles, especially Kevin, whose lines couldn't have been more than a page long. The characters of Chris Klein, Mena Suvari, Tara Reid and Shannon Elizabeth, who all figured in the former American Pie series, aren't even mentioned in the dialogue.

Saving grace

Perhaps the saving grace of "American Wedding," if we are actually to look for substance in the story, is when Stifler himself figures in a problem that endangers his relationship with his friends (and possibly, an appearance in the fourth movie). Half of your conscience wants him dead, the other half wants to see his possible transformation from evil to good.

But one can only hope so much for a movie made famous by a guy who humped his mom's pie, you don't expect things to turn cheesy toward the end.

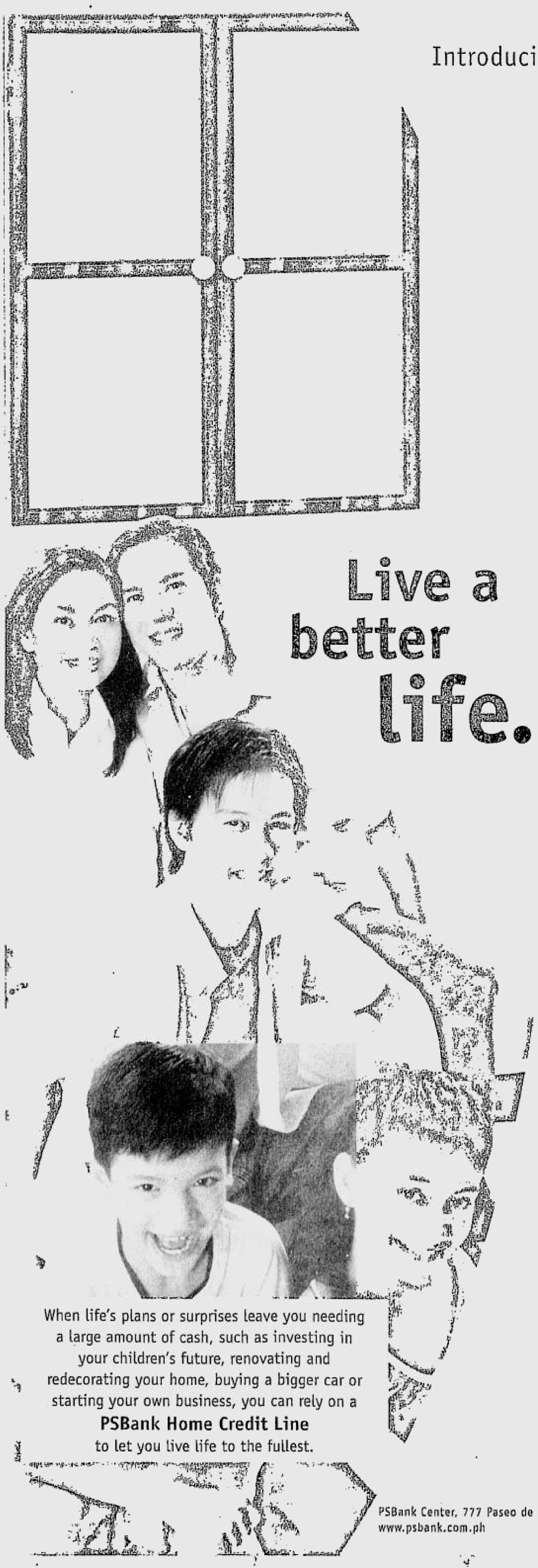
For non-Stifler fans, there's a redeeming scene for this guy who just seems to get away with everything: A dance showdown with a gay guy in a gay bar. Although he still managed to squeeze himself out of the trouble, he did this by making a complete fool out of himself.

Another thing to watch out for, as usual, is the father-and-son talk of the Levinsteins. The unusual brand of paternal wisdom of Jim's dad (played hilariously by Eugene Levy) is no less "moving" than his previous dialogues with his son. At one point, you realize he actually makes sense, despite the unsolicited truthfulness of his anecdotes.

Young people who saw the first American Pie may have grown up and become more mature, but there are varying degrees of Stifler in each one of us. Perhaps it is our curiosity for the weird and repulsive that guarantees the success of such teen movies. Haul your friends over to watch this film if you haven't quenched that curiosity.

Email the author at jason_2bu@yahoo.com

TWO thumbs up for Stifler's (Seann William Scott) disgusting antics.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